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SERGEL'S
Humorous Dialogues

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THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
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PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

FOR

PRIVATE THEATRICALS

By W. D. EMERSON.

Author of "A Country Romance," "The Unknown Rival." "Humble Pie," etc.

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CONTENTS.

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SERGEL'S
HUMOROUS DIALOGUES

SELECTIONS FOR AMATEUR AND
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CONTENTS

OF

SERGEL'S HUMOROUS DIALOGUES

PAGE.

Six Months Ago.....*Felix Dale.* 5
(Two Male and one Female Character.)

The Broken-Hearted Club.....*J. Sterling Coyne.* 15
(Four Male and eight Female Characters.)

One too Many for Him.....*Thos. J. Williams.* 33
(Two Male and three Female Characters.)

A Wordy Combat.....*Charles Dance.* 51
(One Male and one Female Character.)

Vice Against Virtue.....*J. B. Buckstone.* 6[illegible]
(Three Male Characters.)

Royal Talk to a King.....*Charles Dance.* 63
(Two Male and one Female Characters.)

Tact and Fact.....*John Courtney.* 70
(One Male and one Female Character.)

Living on False Pretences.....*J. M. Morton.* 72
(Two Male and one Female Character.)

Two in the Morning.....*Charles Matthews.* 80
(Two Male Characters.)

A Man's Double.....*Hubert Lille.* 85
(One Male and two Female Characters.)

A Tiger and His own Maid.....*Charles Dance.* 90
(One Male and one Female Character.)

PAGE.

An Inventive Genius.....*J. R. Planche.* 93
(Two Male Characters.)

My Uncle's Friends.....*William Brough.* 97
(Two Male Characters.)

Incurable Blues.....*Tom Taylor.* 103
(Two Male Characters.)

A Miser Reclaimed .....*J. R. Planche.* 106
(Two Male and one Female Character.)

A Fraction of a Woman.....*Thomas Haynes Bailey.* 112
(Two Male and two Female Characters.)

Too Attentive by Half.....*J. M. Morton.* 117
(Two Male and one Female Character.)

Cold Poison.....*F. C. Burnand.* 125
(Three Male and one Female Character.)

Killing Time.....132
(Two Male and one Female Character.)

A Corsican Vendetta.....*J. M. Morton.* 136
(Two Male Characters.)

False Pride and Human Nature.....*J. M. Morton.* 140
(Two Male Characters.)

SIX MONTHS AGO.

SCENE.—*Morning Room in a little Country House, prettily furnished; entrance door on garden,* C.; *doors,* R. *and* L.; *piano, with a vase on it,* R.; *work table, &c.; sofa,* L.

At the rising of the Curtain EDWIN BLISS *is lying on the sofa,* L., *with a newspaper, asleep*—ANGELINA *is at her work table,* R. C., *looking at him over her work.*

ANGELINA. Asleep again; and at twelve o'clock in the day. Oh, is too much! (*strikes the table.*)

EDWIN (*waking with a start*). I beg your pardon!

ANGEL. The same to you, my dear; sorry I disturbed you.

EDWIN. As if I'd been asleep. I was only thinking.

ANGEL. Of course; and I oughtn't to have broken the thread of your valuable reflections. Edwin, you're bored!

EDWIN. My treasure, what an idea! Why, our life here is one of delirious excitement. The daily programme is quite sensational. First we get up—then comes our rural breakfast—eggs and cream of the purest description—arcadian but bilious; then a walk to admire the beauties of nature; lunch and the beauties of nature till dinner time; after dinner ditto repeated, with varieties of moonlight effect—when there is a moon. Oh, it's beautiful!

ANGEL. In plain English, you don't care for me any more.

EDWIN. My dear child! as if the deepest love wasn't compatible with an occasional—yawn. (*yawns*—ANGELINA *begins to cry.*) Oh lord! I'm off! (*aside*) Running water is one of the beauties of nature which I least appreciate. (*rises.*)

ANGEL. (*stopping him*). Edwin, we had better come to an understanding at once.

EDWIN. What about? (*goes back to sofa.*)

ANGEL. Oh, I mean it this time. We've been married six months today.

EDWIN. Not longer?

ANGEL. Haven't we lived all the time in this little place, without a soul knowing where we were?

EDWIN. Oh yes.

ANGEL. Not a living being has disturbed our *tête-à-tête*

EDWIN. Oh no.

ANGEL. Haven't I loved you all the time?

EDWIN. Oh yes.

ANGEL. And yet you're bored.

EDWIN. Oh no, not when it don't rain.

ANGEL. For shame, sir! But I'll bear it no longer. We both fancied we were in love: we were both mistaken; yes, sir, both. We'll go back to London, and there, perhaps, you ll be ha—happier. (*bursts into tears, and walks away.*)

EDWIN (*who has risen, delighted at the idea, puts on a melancholy face*). My darling, as if I should dream of leaving this Elysium. Ain't we like Adam and Eve before they were turned out of Eden? (*aside*). By the way, how glad Adam must have been when they *were!*

ANGEL. (*smiling through her tears*). Then you don't wan't to go?

EDWIN. Not I: my only prayer is to live and die here.

ANGEL. I only live for your love, Edwin.

EDWIN. That's all.

ANGEL. It would be so dreadful to lose it.

EDWIN. Horrid. Come and sit here, little woman, and tell us what's to be done to-day? (*sits on arm chair*, L. C., *and seats her on a little stool by his side.*)

ANGEL. Yes, let's think of something.

EDWIN. By all means: something new.

ANGEL. I've thought! look how fine it is, love. Suppose we went into the woods.

EDWIN. What! Beauties of nature again?

ANGEL. Edwin, six months ago you were only too happy to spend all the day with me in the woods; is it *all* over then?

EDWIN. All over! bless her little heart. Remember, there was an awful dew last night, and the ground's as wet as a sponge.

ANGEL. An awful dew! six months ago you called it "the moisture of heaven."

EDWIN. Did I? what an ass I must have been! I say, Lina, is it near lunch time?

ANGEL. Six months ago you never wanted lunch.

EDWIN. Come, say, hang it. (*rising.*)

ANGEL. (*pushing him down*). Sit down, naughty boy, I *will* put you in a good humor. I m going to sit at your feet, and read to you, just as you used to read to me. (*taking a book.*)

EDWIN (*aside*). Oh, ah! verses, I know.

ANGEL. (*opening her book*). Tennyson.

EDWIN. Early Poems—page 16—"The Queen of the May"—please not.

ANGEL. Would you rather have—

EDWIN. "Locksley Hall,'—Ditto—page 45. No, thanks.

ANGEL. (*keeping her temper with an effort*). Isn't his grand Turkship hard to please to-day? But I think I know how to manage him. (*goes to piano*, R.)

EDWIN (*aside*). Six to four on Faust! (ANGELINA *begins the march*) I knew it; Tum, tum-tum tiddy-ti-um ti-tum! I say, don't. I'm sick to death of it.

ANGEL. Will you have a song then? (*begins "The Forsaken," when she reaches the words* "He will return; I know he will," EDWIN *stops her.*)

EDWIN. I know he will! I wish he wouldn't. Anything but that venerable lyric.

ANGEL. (*angrily*). I give it up then! (*jumps up, and slams the piano, nearly knocking off the vase*—EDWIN *runs up.*)

EDWIN. Take care; take care! A little less violence, please, I'm particular about that vase.

ANGEL. I forgot. You wanted to box the housemaid's ears when

she let it fall the other day and all but broke it. Perhaps you'd like to box mine.

EDWIN. My dear! "The man who lays his hand upon a woman," et cetera; though if anything *would* tempt me to disregard that novel and highly moral precept, it would be if this vase were smashed.

ANGEL. A souvenir of some old love, no doubt. Was she pretty? What was her name?

EDWIN. Lina, for shame!

ANGEL. You never cared for me. Six months have been enough to show you what a mistake you have made.

EDWIN. By Jove, you'll make me believe you at last. (*a ring at the door bell*) Hallo! who can that be? (*aside*) Can it be Jack? What a blessed relief if it is.

Enter SERVANT, C., *gives him a card.*

It is! "Mr. John Deedes, Lincoln's Inn." My old friend, and the best fellow in the world, Lina. Show him in at once—and (*to* ANGELINA, *aside*) do look jolly, there's a darling.

ANGEL. (*to* SERVANT). Wait a moment! (*to* EDWIN) then you mean this gentleman to come in?

EDWIN. Of course I do! Why?

ANGEL. Nobody was to have our address, I thought. How did he find us out?

EDWIN (*hesitating*). Oh, some accident, I suppose. My dear, how can we possibly refuse to see him?

ANGEL. Then you persist? John, show the stranger in!

EDWIN. Lina you're joking!

ANGEL. (*deliberately*). Show—the—stranger—in! (SERVANT *goes out*, C.)

EDWIN. My best friend, and my lawyer too, come from town on purpose to see me, on important business very likely. Even married men have business sometimes, you know. Be reasonable.

ANGEL. (*sitting stiffly at her work*) You are master here!

EDWIN. As soon as you know him, you'll like him as much as I do. (*comes near and tries to take her hand*) My darling, of course this man's a horrid bore for coming and disturbing us; but how can I help it?

ANGEL. (*repulsing him*). Do I reproach you?

EDWIN. Naughty child! do be civil to him for my sake.

ANGEL. You don't know me, Edwin. A woman can mask her deepest sorrows with a smile.

EDWIN. Good gracious

ANGEL. Here is your friend.

Enter JACK, C.—EDWIN *runs to meet him.*

EDWIN. Dear old boy, here's a surprise. You haven't forgotten me in my exile, then?

ANGEL. (*aside*). His exile!

JACK (R.). First I must apologize for disturbing you in this charming retreat of yours, and then—but won't you introduce me?

EDWIN. Of course. Lina, let me introduce my old friend Jack Deedes—best of fellows and most honest of attorneys.

JACK *comes forward*—ANGELINA *makes a deep courtsey and sits down again*—EDWIN *looks disgusted.*

EDWIN. You mean to stay with us a good long time, I hope.

ANGEL. (*aside*). Asks him to stay!

JACK. Only long enough for you to do me a service, which is this——

EDWIN. All in good time. I shall lay violent hands on your luggage.

JACK. Why your wife would never forgive me——

EDWIN. If you didn't stay; of course she wouldn't. (*aside to* ANGELINA) Say so, do.

ANGEL. (*coldly*). I should be delighted.

EDWIN. That's right. How about lunch, Lina? of course you haven't had yours, Jack. We'll have a glass of wine together for Auld Lang Syne. (*to* ANGELINA) Do you mind having a talk with the cook, dear? Nothing like personal supervision. (*to* JACK *who has been trying to stop him*) No apologies! stop you must, and lunch you shall! (*aside to* ANGELINA, *as she passes with an air of martyrdom*) Try to be civil, at all events!

[ANGELINA *makes a solemn curtsey and exit*, L.

JACK. Bravo, old boy! what a pretty wife you've got.

EDWIN. Very. But now——

JACK. Money, too, isn't there?

EDWIN. Lots! By-the-bye——

JACK. And expectations besides?

EDWIN. Great.

JACK. Accomplished?

EDWIN. Wonderful!

JACK. Sweet-tempered

EDWIN. Delicious!

JACK. Happy man!

EDWIN. Jolly. (*they sit*, R. C.) Now that's settled; and if you've quite done talking about my wife you may give me some news of my old friends. I feel like Alexander Selkirk or Robinson Crusoe, or any other cast-off mariner. What's become of Charlie Nixon?

JACK. Married.

EDWIN. The devil! To whom?

JACK. You know her—Mary Forrester—that dark girl whose hair turned red last season.

EDWIN. You don't mean it? And Sinclair?

JACK. Going to be married.

EDWIN. What, he too? The complaint's catching, apparently; though how anybody can be such a——wise men, both of them. Now tell me about the women.

JACK. What a comprehensive inquiry. (*aside*) There's something wrong here. Bliss, you surprise me—you, a newly-married man——

EDWIN! Newly! six months ago!

JACK. And to think that I was afraid of coming here. If it hadn't been in your power to do me a great service, I don't think that even that letter of yours would have brought me.

EDWIN. Hush, not a word of that letter, an' thou lovest me. Whatever brought you, never was visitor more welcome.

JACK. According to you, then, *three's* company and two's none. Edwin, you don't love your wife!

EDWIN. My good fellow, I've done nothing else for six months; and how can I help it? She talks French, plays and sings; knows where Jamaica is, more or less; is pretty, sweet-tempered, affectionate, and an orphan. She's an angel, poor child! Talking of angels, how's Anastasia?

JACK. Anastasia?

EDWIN. Yes, that adorable widow, who was the load-star of my affections for months; and who, if stern fate hadn't interfered in the shape of another woman I liked better, might now have been Mrs. Bliss; but

that's over now, Jack. I must come to town with you—only for a week; but a week I must have. You're my lawyer—you have got some business that requires my personal attention; and you carry me off for a day or two.

JACK. Thank you. This is doing unpleasant business "by attorney" with a vengeance. Why drag me into the affair? Can't you say you're going, simply?

EDWIN. Yes, I could; but I'd rather not. My plan's the best.

JACK. Bliss, I'm fairly puzzled. Who on earth could have expected this?

EDWIN. I must have town air or die. My wife's perfect, as I told you, and I love her as much as ever. Nevertheless, if ever you think of marrying——(*looking at him significantly.*)

JACK. I'm to take Mr. Punch's advice—and "don't," I suppose. I tell you what it is, my friend—you've killed your goose—I beg Mrs. Bliss's pardon—your duck for the golden eggs—made the running too heavy at first.

EDWIN. Think so? Anyhow, I count on you.

JACK. I shall astonish your wife considerably.

EDWIN. Hush, here she is! To be continued in our next. (*raising his voice*) Oh, you don't know half our advantages. Such grass—ever so high! Such cows—ever so fat!

Enter ANGELINA, *door*, L.

ANGEL. Luncheon's on the table!

EDWIN. What, in the other room! Why not here, as we always have it?

ANGEL. When we're alone. Oh, Edwin!

EDWIN. Oh, that makes no odds. It's much jollier here. What do you say, Jack?

JACK. Just as you please.

ANGEL. (*aside*). What profanation! (*rings for the* SERVANT.)

Enter SERVANT, L.

EDWIN. Bring the lunch in here, John, table and all, just as it is. (SERVANT *goes out and brings in the lunch*) I'll give you such a glass of sherry, Jack; but you musn't get screwed, you know.

JACK. Your husband is amusing himself at my expense, Mrs. Bliss. (*aside to* EDWIN) She is a pretty woman!

EDWIN. Isn't she! (*aloud*) Now for the lunch. (*they sit down*) Here you are, Jack; here's a chair for you, worked by my wife.

ANGEL. (*aside*). His own chair!

EDWIN (*filling the glasses*). Your jolly good health, old boy! This is like the good old times. (*look from* ANGELINA) That is—I mean—when I say—good old——Have some more wine. (*fills* JACK'S *glass.*)

JACK. Gently, gently!

EDWIN. Forgive my rustic habits. Six months in the wilds of the country; six blessed—(*look from* ANGELINA) *truly* blessed months, which have seemed like so many years—days I mean—Have some more wine! (*pours it over the tablecloth.*)

JACK. This pudding is delicious, Mrs. Bliss.

EDWIN. Made by her own hands. She's a capital cook. Talking of cooks, do you remember that famous supper of ours at—(*checking himself.*)

ANGEL. At—?

EDWIN. At his aunt's. (*aside*) That's a shave.

ANGEL. Oh, indeed. (*to* JACK) It was at——

JACK (*hesitating*). Yes, it was at——

EDWIN. Poor woman, she's dead. It's a pity too, for she was one of the most agreeable women. Wasn't she, Jack?

JACK. Certainly she was.

ANGEL (*aside*). It was some old love of his; how disgraceful! And how gravely that lawyer backs him up. But I suppose that is part of his education.

EDWIN. How's Thompson, by the way?_What's he doing with himself?

JACK. He's married.

EDWIN. What, everybody! (*change of tone*) Quite right. Everybody ought to do it. Everything jolly must come to an end, you know. I mean that everything must come to a jolly end. Have some more wine.

JACK. I quite agree wish you there; and I want your help to bring about another marriage.

EDWIN. Whose next?

JACK. My own. (*change of face on the part of both* EDWIN *and* ANGELINA) Yes, my dear Mrs. Bliss, you see before you a bachelor anxious to recant his errors. And your husband can help me if he pleases.

ANGEL. Of course he pleases. (*warmly*) We'll do all we can for you, Mr. Deedes, if you'll only tell us how.

JACK. Well, then, the lady is a near neighbor of yours in these parts—Mr. Carrington's daughter.

ANGEL. What, Edith? as nice a girl as she's pretty.

JACK. That's the one.

EDWIN. That little thing with the freckles?

JACK. I beg your pardon, dimples. Well, I happened to hear that the Carringtons were old friends of yours; and as about the same time I learnt, (EDWIN *kicks him*) by accident, that you were rusticating within a two hours' ride of them, I determined to find you out, and ask Bliss for a letter of introduction to the paternal Carrington; and armed with that, I have no reason to despair of success.

ANGEL. You shall have it, and all our best wishes too. Go and write it at once, Edwin.

EDWIN. Stop a bit. (*shaking his head*) I say, old boy——

ANGEL. You don't seem too anxious to do your best friend a good turn.

EDWIN. You don't understand me, love. If there were two Angelinas in the world—Now, but there's only one, and I've got her. Jack, are you serious?

JACK. Very, I'm in love.

EDWIN. Bah! What a reason, at your time of life!

ANGEL. You don't believe in love-matches then?

EDWIN. How you do take a fellow up, Lina. It was all very well for such a placid, home-loving creature as I to commit matrimony. The domestic hearth is my natural sphere. But for such a dog as Jack——

JACK. Come, I say——

ANGEL. (*rising*). Never mind him, Mr. Deedes. I don't believe him. Will you excuse me for a few minutes? My head aches to-day. (*going towards the door*, R.)

EDWIN (*aside to her*). My dear love——

ANGEL. (*aside to him.*) Be quiet, sir, and for shame! (*aside*) This can't and shan't go on any longer. [*Exit*, R.

EDWIN. There! What do you say to that?

JACK. That I'm very sorry to see it.

EDWIN. Then don't neglect the warning. You want to marry—for

love—I congratulate you. You haven't got such a thing as a weed about you, have you? Thanks. (*lighting one and lying on sofa*, L.) Do you remember Moore's lines:—

> Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,
> Till love falls asleep in its sameness of splendor."

And then the shadows come, thick enough. Ah, isn't this cigar good? Look here: I haven't smoked for six months—that's love *after* marriage!

JACK. Then what'll your wife say to the smell of the smoke?

EDWIN. Chance that—I'll say it's you.

JACK. Thank you. But you may say what you like; you know yourself how, some day or another, every man grows tired of single blessedness.

EDWIN. Analyze that feeling, and what does it come to? A thirst for novelty, and a yearning for shirt-buttons.

JACK. Prosaic idea! Besides I always wear studs!

EDWIN. Matter-of-fact observation! Jack, I'm wifed to death. Everything here is like my happiness—home-made. Look at that foot-stool—she worked it; that pudding—she made it; my slippers—my smoking cap—my braces! There isn't no mortal thing she doesn't make.

JACK. What, badly?

EDWIN. No, well; didn't I tell you she's an angel? But that's the worst of it. Everything—cakes and caresses—poetry and pastry, is sweetness, softness, and monotony. I know what the end of it will be. I shall simply die of excess of happiness or fat!

JACK. But you're not a bit fatter than becomes a man at your time of life—the father—or, at all events, the husband—of a family!

EDWIN. I beg your pardon. If I don't take to Banting in the usual form, I shall soon want his services in his capacity of undertaker. There's only one chance for both of us, and that is to be off to town at once.

JACK. What, to take your fat down?

> To go to town's the only art I know
> To make men slender, or to keep them so

Do talk reason for a moment.

EDWIN. Reason be hanged! London, liberty, and Anastasia. (*rises*) By Jove! how I did worship that woman!

JACK. Hush! not so loud.

EDWIN. Chance that. I'll say it's you. Bless her, she gave me that vase, which the maid was so nearly smashing. If she had! Now are you coming? (*goes up*, L.)

JACK. No! I daresay you think me a great fool for wanting to marry a pretty and charming girl; but I stick to my point; so go and write that letter to old Carrington as soon as you can.

EDWIN. You've made up your mind then?

JACK. I have indeed.

EDWIN. Positive?

JACK. Positive.

EDWIN. Then I'll write the fatal letter. (*going to the door*, L., *turns*) Remember, I shall praise you up to the skies!

JACK. The higher the better.

EDWIN. You'll be adored to a certainty!

JACK. The more the merrier.

EDWIN. Accepted and married out of hand!

JACK. I hope so.

EDWIN. And you'll be a happy man before you know where you are. I wish you joy of it. [*Exit*, L.

JACK. That's settled, then; and it's my own fault, I fancy, if things don't turn out as I wish. As for Bliss, poor devil, things are looking bad for him. "Excess of happiness, or fat!" (*sits*, L. C.) Upon my word, it's rather serious when you come to look at it in that light. It is enough to make a man uneasy——

Enter ANGELINA, *hastily*, R., *with a sheet of the* "Times" *in her hand.*

ANGEL. Mr. Deedes.

JACK. I beg your pardon.

ANGEL. Don't get up, pray. (*taking chair by him*) You're a lawyer; and I want your advice.

JACK. My advice, Mrs. Bliss? You're not going to law about anything, surely! As an attorney I'm bound to encourage you—as a friend permit me to recommend my own example. Nothing on earth would induce me to go to law; I know too much about it.

ANGEL. But it is as an attorney that I want your help. (*hesitating*) You'll excuse my asking you if I ought to pay in advance; I've got half a sovereign, if you can give me three-and-fourpence change.

JACK (*laughing*). No, no; we're not so bad as the doctors, after all. Our profession *give* credit, though they don't *get* much. What do you want to consult me about?

ANGEL. I will tell you. Look at this. (*pointing to a place in the paper.*)

JACK. Court of Probate and Divorce. Before the Judge Ordinary! Good heavens, Mrs. Bliss, you don't want to have anything to do with *him!*

ANGEL. That's precisely what I do want; though he should be a Judge Extraordinary to appreciate my feelings. I was behind the door just now, and heard all that passed between you and my husband.

JACK (*aside*). The devil!

ANGEL. You don't wonder at my resolution now. I mean to have a divorce, and I will. You're a lawyer, and know all about these things; I'm a woman, and know a good deal, thanks to the Ordinary and the "Times" reporter. Though we may not vote for Members of Parliament —I suppose because women always change their minds, and Members never do—still we're not so much in the dark as you used to keep us. Do you think I don't know that a wife has a right to pin-money while she lives with her husband, and ali-mony if she leaves him? Do you think I don't know——

JACK. My dear Mrs. Bliss, your information is wonderful; you seem to have "Every Woman her own Lawyer" at your fingers' ends. I really don't see, under the circumstances, of what use I can be.

ANGEL. You can conduct my case for me, and call yourself as the chief witness. You've seen enough since you came this morning to convince all the Ordinaries in Christendom of the existence of impossibility of good temper——

JACK. Meaning incompatibility of temper?

ANGEL. It's the same thing. And cruelty—horrid cruelty—you have seen that!

JACK. Oh, dreadful!—from a moral point of view—or perhaps, I should say an *im*moral! But the law requires tangible proofs.

ANGEL. Tangible, indeed! isn't Anastasia tangible? You refuse to help me, in short; then I shall consult some other lawyer.

JACK (*aside*). And so make a scandal of this foolish business. Not if

I can help it. (*aloud*) Well, Mrs. Bliss, if it must be so it must; and we must get together as much evidence as we can. Let me see—your husband has no other wife living?

ANGEL. Sir!

JACK. Or you another husband?

ANGEL. Mr. Deedes! As if such things happened, except in Miss Braddon's novels, or among the Mormons!

JACK. Oh, it's done sometimes, I assure you; and, professionally speaking, it is not undesirable. In cases like the present, it simplifies matters amazingly. Has your husband ever attempted your life?—with steel or poison?

ANGEL. N-no. He advised me to take steel for some weeks when I wasn't strong, but——

JACK. A hidden meaning! something might be made of that. Has he ever struck you?

ANGEL. No, n-o, not *yet*. (*looking towards the house*) No. (*aside*) I wonder if I could make him! (*aloud*) Thank you, Mr. Deedes. I see my way clear now. You have done me a great service; and in a few minutes I shall ask you to do me another. [*Exit*, R.

JACK. This is a pleasant position. See your way, do you? That's more than I do. If six months bring a married couple to this, and a couple who were madly in love at starting, I begin to think I'd better go back to town!

Enter EDWIN, L., *with a letter.*

EDWIN. Here's your letter, my poor dear friend.

JACK. Oh! thank you. Too late for to-day's post, isn't it?

EDWIN. Not a bit of it.

JACK. Ah! then keep it till it is.

EDWIN (*delighted*). What, changed your mind? "Bless thee, my John, thou art translated!" We'll go to London by the morning mail.

JACK. One moment. I've something to say to you.

EDWIN. Say it in the train. Once more, London, liberty, and Anastasia!

JACK. Oh, ah! Anastasia. When you mentioned her this morning I quite forgot a little piece of news that I had to give you.

EDWIN. Poor dear woman! how my marriage must have wounded her.

JACK. Deeply, no doubt. She tried homœopathy to cure it. She's married, too.

EDWIN. What? when? to whom?

JACK. A week after your wedding your Ariadne was united to the eminent tenor, Busterini.

EDWIN. Married a tenor!

JACK. It was a nine days' wonder, I assure you.

EDWIN. Married a tenor! I shall take a walk in the garden. [*Exit*, C.

JACK (*laughing*). So much for his widow! The lesson will do him good and bring him to his senses again. As for me, I wish I could make up my mind about that letter.

Enter ANGELINA, R., *quickly.*

ANGEL. My husband has just left you?

JACK. This instant. He's only gone for a turn in the garden. And look, he's coming back again—for his hat, probably.

ANGEL. Now for the service I want you to do me, then; for you will help me, won't you—not as a lawyer, but as a friend?

JACK. Who could resist such an appeal as that?

ANGEL. A thousand thanks! I want you to wait there, (*points to open window*) while my husband and I are here together. You'll hear a noise I dare say——

JACK. Ah, I dare say I shall.

ANGEL. But whatever happens, don't come in or interrupt us till you hear this chair fall; then rush in immediately, and—you shall see what you shall see.

JACK. So I should imagine; but what will it be? I don't understand.

ANGEL. But you soon will. He's coming—quick!

[*Exit* JACK, *by window*, L.

ANGEL. (*placing the vase near the edge of the piano*). If anything would induce him to box a woman's ears, he said—and I think with a little management I might make him. I hope it doesn't hurt much, though.

Enter EDWIN, C., *gloomily, talking to himself.*

EDWIN. "I never loved a dear gazelle." Of course I didn't—I never saw one. Married to a tenor! If it had only been a baritone.

Having known me to decline
On a range of lower feelings,
And a finer voice than mine.

It must have been out of pique she did it. She was a widow, and ought in common fairness to have waited for the chance of my being a widower. Shallow, changing woman!

ANGEL. (*aside.*) Angry about something; so much the better. (*aloud*) Ahem!

EDWIN. Oh, you're there. Where's Jack?

ANGEL. I don't know, sir, and I don't care.

EDWIN (*absently*). Nor do I. (*aside*) Hang it, I remember now! That Italian beggar was always giving her music lessons.

ANGEL. (*aside.*) So far so good. Now for the next step. (*takes up "Tennyson" and reads aloud, without stops or emphasis*) Early Poems—Locksley Hall—page 45.

O, my cousin, shallow hearted!
O, my cousin, mine no more;
O, the dreary, dreary moorland,
O, the barren, barren shore!

(EDWIN *pays no attention—she reads the lines again, louder*) EDWIN (*half aside.*)

I to wed with Coromantes,
I who managed, very near,
To secure the heart and fortune
Of the widow Shillibeer.

No, that's not Tennyson—it's Bon Gaultier—but the sentiment's the same. (*to* ANGELINA) Charming poet, Tennyson! how well he knew the human heart.

ANGEL. (*aside*). Good gracious, he *likes* it! I must try something else. (*goes to the piano and sings "The Forsaken" out of tune and tune—as* EDWIN *says nothing, she repeats* "Here to die," *angrily*)

EDWIN. Leave you here to die? of course he wouldn't; he'd be a brute if he did! Very nicely sung, love, you're improving every day.

ANGEL. (*aside*). Oh dear, this won't do at all! will "Faust" be more

effective, I wonder? (*begins to play the march in the same way,* EDWIN *waves his hand in time to the music.*)

EDWIN (*talking to himself*). What an opera that is! Last time I heard it, it was at Her Majesty's, in a box with *her!* During the garden scene, she was pensive! her thoughts with me! her eyes fixed vacantly on the stage—on the form of "Faust." (*starting up*) By Jove it was Busterini!

ANGEL. (*aside*). At last! (*playing louder and louder.*)

EDWIN (*pacing up and down*). The perfidious monster! and that fool of a sister, who used to play propriety at the back of the box, and who saw nothing! to be sure I didn't, either.

ANGEL. (*aside*). Now he's at boiling point! It can't fail! (*knocks down the vase, which breaks—*EDWIN *runs up—she puts her hand to her face with a scream.*) Now it's coming!

EDWIN (*taking her in his arms*). Bless you, my little guardian angel! how I do love you!

ANGEL. (*bewildered*). Edwin!

EDWIN. You're my good genius, Lina mine! the only woman I ever loved.

ANGEL. (*looking him full in the face*). Except Anastasia!

EDWIN (*stupefied*). Eh! who?

ANGEL. Anastasia, whom you are going to see in London!

EDWIN. An—London? (*aside*) I'm done.

ANGEL. I was in that room and heard all.

EDWIN. In that room—ah! when I was in this?

ANGEL. (*bursting into tears*). O, it's too bad of you: I vowed that I wouldn't cry, but I can't help it. I did—love you—so much!

EDWIN (*suddenly forcing a laugh*). So you were quite taken in, then? Bravo, bravo!

ANGEL. What do you mean?

EDWIN. She believed it all! Bless her innocent little heart! Why I knew you were there all the time; and Jack and I got up that little scene in order to cure you of your small jealousies!

ANGEL. As if I could believe that! Your journey to London——

EDWIN. Imaginary.

ANGEL. And Anastasia?

EDWIN. Ha ha! and you believed in her, too. Anna Maria—Anaconda—what's her name? was a myth of Jack's creation! The dog! he was always up to some game or another. Even in school-days we used to call him "Evil Deedes."

ANGEL. Oh Edwin! I'm too glad to believe you! The lesson was a hard one! but perhaps I deserved it. Forgive me, dear, won't you?

EDWIN. No—it is you who must forgive me.

ANGEL. No—you.

EDWIN. Well, then, try both! (*they rush into each others arms, and upset the chair.* JACK *rushes in theatrically.*)

JACK. Forbear, unhappy man. Hit one of your own sex. Hallo! what's this? It doesn't look much like cruelty. This was the chair, I think, Mrs. Bliss? (*looking at her.*)

ANGEL. (*aside*). Mr. Deedes: and I'd forgotten all about him!

EDWIN (*aside*) Jack! and he hasn't got his cue! (*aloud, winking at* JACK) Well, our plan has succeeded wonderfully.

JACK (*mystified*). No, has it though? (*aside*) This is the most extraordinary establishment!

ANGEL. It was too bad of you, Mr. Deedes, to play me such a trick.

EDWIN. O, too bad of both of us. (*aside to* JACK) Hold your tongue.

ANGEL. But the lesson has not been thrown away; and thank you for it (*giving* JACK *her hand.*)

EDWIN (*giving his*). Thank you, Jack, thank you.

JACK. You're very welcome, I'm sure.

ANGEL. Only you really must let me compliment you on your proficiency in the art of—fibbing!

EDWIN. Yes, Jack's good at that; it's professional.

JACK. Will somebody explain something?

EDWIN. Everything is explained. It's an understood thing that you managed it capitally; so, (*aside to* JACK) for goodness sake keep quiet.

JACK (*aside*). Well, I shall understand in time, I suppose.

ANGEL. And now, Edwin, the sooner we leave for London the better. No objection; I am wiser than I was, and see what a mistake I made, thanks to a true friend.

EDWIN. Yes, Jack, you're a true friend—you are. What shall we do to show our gratitude?

JACK. Well, since you seem to have settled it all between you, give me that letter of introduction.

EDWIN. With the greatest pleasure in life, old fellow. Go on and prosper. I always told you that marriage is the one road to happiness!

JACK (*aside, laughing*). Confound his impudence!

EDWIN. Here's your letter, and good speed to your wooing; and may you never repent the step which you are going to take more than Lina and I mean to regret that we took Six Months Ago!

JACK DEEDES, R. ANGELINA *and* EDWIN, C.

CURTAIN.

Cast of Characters.

Royal Olympic Theatre, London,
July 26, 1867.

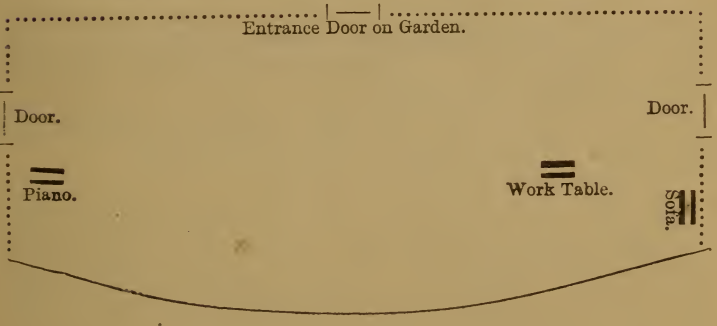
Edwin Bliss.....Mr. John Clayton.
Jack Deedes, his friend and lawyer.....Mr. H. J. Montague.
Angelina Bliss, his wife.....Miss Milly Palmer.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION—FORTY MINUTES.

COSTUMES OF THE DAY.

Scenery.

Morning Room in a little country house, prettily furnished.



Properties.—Piano, vase, work-table, sofa, little stool, volume of Tennyson, lunch-table and lunch, wine and glasses, a copy of "Times," letter.

Stage Directions.—R. means Right of Stage, facing the Audience; L. Left; C. Centre; R. C. Right of centre; L. C. Left of centre. D. F. Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. Centre Door in the Flat; R. D. F. Right Door in the Flat; L. D. F. Left Door in the Flat; R. D. Right Door; L. D. Left Door; 1 E. First Entrance; 2 E. Second Entrance; U. E. Upper Entrance; 1, 2 or 3 G. First, Second or Third Groove.

THE BROKEN-HEARTED CLUB.

SCENE.—*Drawing-room in* SADGROVE LODGE. MRS. LOVEBIRD *discovered reading a newspaper at* R. *of table*, C.; ARAMINTA WILLOWBY *drawing at small table*, L.; LOUISA LIPSCOMBE *embroidering* L. *of table*, C.; SERENA BROOK *asleep in a rocking-chair*, R. *front, a book which she has been reading lies at her feet;* IDA PARK *at piano*, R. 2 E., *touching the keys abstractedly.*

MRS. LOVEBIRD (*putting down the newspaper*). There! I cannot peruse the dreadful details. Poor woman! Another unhappy victim to marriage. One more proof of the cruelty o' husbands to their uncomplaining wives. (*the others sigh deeply.*)

ARA. WIL. They have my sympathy, poor things! I pity them from the depths of my sorrowful heart. But, my dear Mrs. Lovebird, what fresh instance of man's barbarity have you been reading?

LOUISA LIPSCOMBE. } Oh, pray let us hear it.
IDA PARK. }

MRS. LOVE. Well, to gratify you (*takes up the paper*) here it is. (*reads*) "A gentleman of this neighborhood, who has been recently married, discovered, when dressing last Thursday morning, that his shirt had lost a button. Enraged at this neglect of domestic duty, he seized the razor with which he had been shaving, rushed on his trembling wife, who had fallen on her knees before him, and with one cut severed——" (*the ladies start with a thrill of horror.*)

ARA. WIL. Her throat?

MRS. LOVE. (*reading*). "Severed her lovely chignon from her head." (*the* LADIES *clap their hands to the back of their heads and exclaim*, "Monster!" "Brute!")

IDA PARK. If you want another instance of the barbarity of husbands I'll read you a passage from my friend Julia Marston's letter. (*reads*) "Could you believe, my dear Ida, that Augustus has already shown himself in his true colors, and from being the humblest of my slaves, has, in six short weeks become a perfect domestic tyrant? Imagine him carrying his cruelty to the extent of refusing to take me to the opera last Saturday, because—oh, heavens! that I should live to write it! because he was going to his club." (*the* LADIES *shudder*) "Be warned by the fate of your unhappy friend, and never marry."

LADIES. Oh, never, never!

MRS. LOVE. Men are all alike—perfidious, base, and treacherous creatures. I could tell you such tales of husbands who got rid of their unsuspecting partners by the most refined cruelty.

ARA. WIL. Like the celebrated fiddler who destroyed four of his wives in succession, by tickling the soles of their feet while they slept.

MRS. LOVE. Ah, my dear girl, there are means quite as effectual for killing a poor wife as tickling her sole—secret persecutions, domestic tortures, neglect, suspicion, tyranny, jealousy.

LOU. LIPS. Jealousy! like that of Bluebeard, who hung his six wives on six clothes'-pegs in a back attic.

MRS. LOVE. Historic doubts have been thrown upon the authenticity of that thrilling legend, my love; but whether it be true or false, it proves that men are capable of treating their wives like their old coats, by hanging them up when they get tired of them.

ARA. WIL. Ah, you have had experience of the married state, Mrs. Lovebird; you have suffered as a wife.

MRS. LOVE. Suffered, my dear! Martyrdom is a mild word to describe what I endured during the six years of my wedded life with poor Lovebird, who, as you may have heard, was collector at Dalhootie, in India.

IDA PARKE. Did he tickle the soles of your poor feet?

MRS. LOVE. No; I must, in justice to the departed collector, confess that he was kind and affectionate to me when sober; but being abominably addicted to brandy pawnee, his normal condition was intoxication, and his daily exercise, beating his wife. *Delirium tremens*, however, released the collector and delivered me.

ARA. WIL. How little we know of men. When they kneel at our feet, pleading for the smallest fragment of our heart, they appear so gentle, so loving, so devoted, that we cannot help compassionating the poor creatures. It was thus that I learned to love Stanley Graham; but, alas! he proved inconstant, and—I—*I* am here.

LOU. LIPS. Ah, you have touched a tender chord in my aching bosom. False Chomley, false Chomley! (*applies her handkerchief to her eyes.*)

ARA. WIL. Who was Chomley, dear!

LOU. LIPS. Arthur Chomley, of the Guards. Splendid man! Such eyes, such teeth, such boots!

IDA PARKE. I know the fellow. Tawny beard and whiskers. Rides like a centaur.

LOU. LIPS. And dances like an angel. Heigho! 'Twas at Lady Pennington's ball we first met, and there, while whirling me in a delicious waltz, he laid his heart at my feet.

MRS. LOVE. And you, silly girl, stooped to pick it up?

LOU. LIPS. I thought it would make such a pretty toy.

MRS. LOVE. Dangerous toys, my dear, for girls to play with. But you say your lover proved false?

LOU. LIPS. False as Mrs. Smiler's teeth; for I discovered, a few days after, that he was engaged to be married to Miss Lombard, the rich stockbroker's daughter; so when he next called, I was "not at home."

IDA PARKE. Acted like a girl of spirit. But my case was still worse. That jealous wretch, Tom Hazleton—I really liked him, and might have been persuaded to marry him, but for his objecting to my study of botany.

ARA. WIL. Object to your studying botany?

IDA PARKE. With Captain Brownhill.

ARA. WIL. Oh! (LADIES *laugh.*)

IDA PARKE. He came to our pic-nic last summer, at Burnham Beeches. I found that, like me, he was an enthusiastic lover of botany, and, in the ardor of our favorite pursuit, we strolled away to collect ferns.

MRS. LOVE. Oh, ah! Ferns!

IDA PARKE. Well, when we returned to the party, Master Tom made himself perfectly ridiculous. Wouldn't speak to me all that evening, and on the following morning sent me back my photograph, with a lock of jet black hair, which he had begged from me on his knees.

ARA. WIL. But, my dear Ida, your hair is not black.

IDA PARKE. No, no. That was before I went into auburn.

ARA. WIL. Did he not offer any explanation of his conduct?

IDA PARKE. Only a few formal lines, saying he could never trust his happiness to a girl who had such a passion for fern-hunting.

LADIES. Inhuman! Barbarous! Disgraceful!

LOU. LIPS. How shocked you must have been. Did you faint, dear, or go into hysterics?

IDA PARKE. Neither. I was never more pleased in my life—because—I could hate him—and—despise him—and—(*struggling with her emotion*) and—let everybody see—how little I cared for a man—I always detested, (*bursts into tears and sobs*) always, always. (*weeps.*)

LOU. LIPS. Dear Ida! My heart bleeds for her.

MRS. LOVE. You have suffered much, poor child; but your fate has not been so deplorable as that of Serena Brook, who slumbers there (*pointing to* SERENA BROOK, *who sleeps in a rocking-chair*, R.) in happy forgetfulness of her woes.

SERENA B. (*asleep*). When shall we have dinner?

MRS. LOVE. Her soul is far away in dreams.

IDA PARKE. How was her heart crushed, Mrs. Lovebird?

MRS. LOVE. Don't you know? She was to have been married to Sir Melton Mowbray, a Leicestershire baronet, enormously rich, and proportionately stupid, who, on the day preceding that fixed for the wedding, broke his neck hunting.

LADIES. Shocking! Dreadful!

MRS. LOVE. Wasn't it? And to think that the man might have jumped into that quarry quite as well the day after as the day before his wedding, and so have left his inconsolable widow a title and a handsome jointure. That was what rendered his loss distressing.

IDA PARKE. But she bears her misfortune with wonderful composure.

MRS. LOVE. Yes, when she's awake she reads novels, and they keep her from thinking.

ARA. WILL. Ah, it was a happy thought of yours, my dear Mrs. Lovebird, to have instituted the "Broken-Hearted Club," where, in sweet seclusion, we poor blighted ones may pour our sorrows into sympathizing bosoms.

LOU. LIPS. Undisturbed by the frivolous gayeties of the unfeeling world. (CAMILLA SPOONER *and* CISSY MAYTHORNE *are heard laughing in the garden off* R. U. E. *The* LADIES *appear surprised.*)

MRS. LOVE. Laughter! Oh, 'tis our new companions, Camilla Spooner and Cissy Maythorne.

Enter, D. *in* F., CAMILLA SPOONER, *carrying battledores, and* CISSY MAYTHORNE, *with whip, laughing.*

MRS. LOVE. Young ladies! Young ladies! are you aware you are breaking one of the rules of the Broken-Hearted Club! We permit a mournful smile when we are in spirits, but laughter, never.

CISSY MAY. We know we were very wrong.

MRS. LOVE. You come here, my dears, to be miserable.

CAM. S. And we *are* very miserable.

CISSY MAY. But it was impossible not to laugh at the droll figure of a man who popped his bald head through the branches of the cherry-tree that overgrows the garden-wall.

LADIES (*scream and exclaim*). A man!

SER. BROOK (*awakening suddenly*). Oh, dear! Ah! what is it? You

have awakened me from a delicious dream of strawberry ices. What has happened?

MRS. LOVE. Something dreadful, my love. (*impatiently*) There's a *man* in my cherry-tree! (*calling* L.) Perkins, Perkins, call the police!

CAM. S. Oh, there's no need to be alarmed; 'tis only our neighbor, the Irish major, who clambered over the garden-wall to fetch our shuttlecock, which we had tossed into the lane.

MRS. LOVE. (*with evident agitation*). Major M'Cool!

CAM. S. He that sits in the next pew to ours at church every Sunday.

CISSY MAY. And keeps his eyes fixed on you the whole time.

MRS. LOVE. (*coquettishly*) I certainly have noticed the way in which he stares at me; but what can you expect from an Irishman on half pay? Where did you leave him, ladies?

CAM. S. (*laughing*). Suspended by his coat-tails from a branch of the cherry-tree.

MRS. LOVE. (*alarmed*). Oh, heavens! what is to be done? You know that by the rules of our society we are bound to uncompromising hostility to the other sex.

LADIES. Hear, hear, hear!

MRS. LOVE. But humanity teaches us to be generous to a fallen, I should say, a suspended enemy. Compassion is the noblest attribute of the female heart. The Major is a stout man, and if we leave him dangling in the cherry-tree he'll have a fit of apoplexy. Shall we suspend our rules and save him?

ARA. WIL. Yes, yes, suspend our rules, and cut down the Major.

CISSY MAY. I'll lend my scissors.

CAM. S. (*looking off at back, utters an exclamation of alarm*). You may save yourself the trouble; he has dropped to the ground like a ripe medlar. Oh! if he should be squashed. No, no, he has got to his feet, and is coming this way.

MRS. LOVE. This way! My dear girls, you must retire; I will remain and confront him. One look of mine will petrify the bold intruder.

IDA PARKE. Don't spare him, Mrs. Lovebird.

MRS. LOVE. No, my dear; I'll think of the departed collector and the wrongs of our sex. (*All the* LADIES *except* MRS. LOVEBIRD *exeunt* R.)

Enter MAJOR MCCOOL *at back with a shuttlecock—his military coat is corn up the back.*

MAJOR. I beg pardon, madam. Mrs. Lovebird, I presume. (L. *of* C.)

MRS. LOVE. (*stiffly*). That is my name, sir. (C.)

MAJOR. 'Pon my honor, there is nothing I admoire so much as a pretty name, except it be the lovely woman that bears it.

MRS. LOVE. (*offended*). Sir—a—a—mister—a—major—

MAJOR. Allow me to introjuce meself—Major McCool, late of the One Hundred and Ninety-ninth Foot, retired from the service of Her Majesty to devote meself exclusively to the service fo the ladies, God bless 'em, with three times three!

MRS. LOVE. And your business, sir?

MAJOR. Me business! I'm proud to say, ma'am, that the McCools were all gintlemen born, and never dirtied their hands with business. Dhrinking, foighting, and love-making has been our principal occupation ever since the days of Adam.

MRS. LOVE. I mean, sir, what has procured me the honor of your unexpected appearance at Sadgrove Lodge? In short, what has brought you here?

MAJOR. Propitious fate, ma'am. I was taking my usual meditative

walk on the other side of your garden wall—that envious wall which hoides so much beauty from the unhappy world—when suddenly this shuttlecock came flying into me eye. If you understand anything of the habits, manners, and customs of shuttlecocks, ma'am, you'll purseive—

MRS. LOVE. Pardon me, I have no desire to enter upon a subject so flighty in its nature.

MAJOR. Then we'll leave ornithology (*puts the shuttlecock in his pocket*) and turn to some more agreeable discoorse. Bedad, I'm the pleasantest fellow you could meet in a day's walk over a mountain. Did you ever hear me tell me famous story of riding a crocodile a-horseback across the Chuckamuddy river in Africa?

MRS. LOVE. As we never met before, it is not probable I could have heard your famous story, nor have I any wish to hear it now.

MAJOR. Of coorse, my dear lady, every one to their taste. Maybe you have a fancy for military adventures; I'd like now to tell you a droll story of me cousin, Tom Blake, of the Connaught Rangers, who one dark night carried off the ould aunt of Miss Babbington, the great heiress, when he thought he had the girl herself snug by his side in the post-chaise.

MRS. LOVE. I have no curiosity to know anything about your cousin's adventure, sir.

MAJOR. Haven't you, now? Well that's a pity, for it was the cause of the prettiest duel that was ever seen on the Fifteen Acres; and be the same token Tom was lamed for loife by a bullet in the knee; and worse than that, he had to marry the ould aunt, laving the heiress to be snapped up by his sickond, Dick Rafferty; and that puts me in mind of a good story about Dick's wedding.

MRS. LOVE. Pray don't trouble yourself, Major.

MAJOR. It will be a pleasure, Mrs. Lovebird.

MRS. LOVE. I must beg your pardon, I have a particular engagement.

MAJOR. An engagement! May I take the liberty of asking if it's a matrimonial engagement?

MRS. LOVE. (*embarrassed*). Really—a—Major—the—a question—from a stranger—is—

MAJOR. And why should I be a stranger? Haven't I been foive minutes and a-half in your company; and didn't Captain Hannigan coort and wed his wife in half a minute less time? So don't call me a stranger any more; it's not friendly, Mrs. Lovebird.

MRS. LOVE. (*aside*). This is a most extraordinary man. How am I to get rid of him? I must be plain with him. Major, I have some domestic affairs to attend.

MAJOR. Attend them by all means, my dear madam; don't mind me; I can wait until you have time to reshume our interesting *tête-a-tête*. (*sits* R. *of table.*)

MRS. LOVE. *Tête-a-tête!* (*aside*) This is intolerable! I have unconsciously permitted him to draw me into a conversation, and now he seems determined to take advantage of his position to establish himself here on the most familiar terms. What would the "Broken-Hearted Club" say if they knew of my weakness? He shall go instantly. (*aloud*) Major McCool, you must understand the impropriety of your remaining here a moment longer; I have therefore to request you will take your departure.

MAJOR (*draws chair forward*). With pleasure.

MRS. LOVE. I said take your departure, but you have taken a chair.

MAJOR (*jumping up*). A thousand pardons; I should have offered you one first. (*places another chair*, L. C.) There, now sit down, and we can talk quietly and comfortably together.

MRS. LOVE. Excuse me, sir, will you go?

MAJOR. "Go," did you say?

MRS. LOVE. I said "go."

MAJOR. Oh, very well, Mrs. Lovebird; I'm not the man to remain one moment in a house where me absence would be welcome. (*sits*, L. C.) But I'm bound to say, madam, that the perils I've dared to obtain the pleasure of this deloightful interview merits some consideration.

MRS. LOVE. Perils! What perils?

MAJOR. Bottles, ma'am! Not that I'm afraid of bottles; in fact, I've seen a good deal of service amongst full ones, but a *chevaux de frise* of broken bottles bristling on the top of a garden wall is not pleasant to the feelings. Then there's that ambuscade of your cherry-tree, into which I fell and hung, like the Golden Fleece over a draper's door, to the serious damage to me military frock. (*rises, and shows his coat split up the back*) Look at me, Mrs. Lovebird;—an iligant imitation of a spitchcock.

MRS. LOVE. (*aside, laughing*). What a ridiculous figure! But the poor man is evidently smitten! Heigho! I can only pity him. Are you aware, Major, that none of your sex are admitted as visitors to Sadgrove Lodge?

MAJOR. I've heard of that inhuman exclusion, madam; but pray don't consider me as a visitor; put me down as a permanent lodger, with a quarter's notice to quit.

MRS. LOVE. Impossible! The "Broken-Hearted Club" is composed of a few unhappy ladies who have forsworn the society of men.

MAJOR. Unhappy, ma'am! I'm not surprised you should be unhappy. Why, you might as well thry to make a jug of punch without whiskey as society without men.

MRS. LOVE. Ah! solitude brings solace to the wounded heart. There are some sorrows that we must bear alone.

MAJOR. Why should you bear them alone, when there are so many good-natured fellows would be happy to share the burthen of your griefs?

MRS. LOVE. Yes, yes; sympathy in woe is consoling; but the drooping lily bends its head, and weeps in silence. (*handkerchief to her eyes.*)

MAJOR. Naturally, my dear madam; but when there's a compassionate hand convaynient to dhry those pearly drops, weeping must be rather sociable. (*applies his handkerchief to her eyes, she starts back.*)

MRS. LOVE. (*angrily*). Major! I'm astonished!

MAJOR. But not displaised, Mrs. Lovebird? I give you me word, the soight of beauty in tears so overcomes me, that I don't know what I'm doing.

MRS LOVE. Well, I ought to be very angry, and I shall be if you don't go this moment.

MAJOR. Oh! certainly—of coorse—if you desire it. (*waves him to go*) That's enough. Good day, Mrs. Lovebird. I'm your most obejiant humble servant. (*bows, and is going up stage; stops, and returns down*) I beg your pardon. Have you such an instrument as a pin you could lend me, to repair dilapidations in my coat?

MRS. LOVE. (*shortly*). No, sir!

MAJOR. Never mind, it's of no consequence; they'll take me for a Proossian aigle. [*Exit*, D. *in* F.

MRS. LOVE. At last he's gone. (*to* R., MCCOOL *re-enters at back*) Ah! (*to* C.)

MAJOR Only one moment, my dear madam; I suspect we're going to have a shower. I heard a donkey braying, and when a donkey brays it's a sign he's onaisy in his mind. You haven't a sthray umbrella about you?

MRS. LOVE. I'm sorry to say I have not.

MAJOR. It don't matter in the least. If it rains I can run home between the dhrops. Good evening Mrs. Lovebird. [*Exit at back.*

MRS. LOVE. So; I don't think he can invent any other pretext for coming back. (MCCOOL *re-enters at back*) Good heavens!

MAJOR (*entering*). I'm here again like a tax-collector; but it's not an umbrella this time—it's a shuttlecock; the shuttlecock of the "Broken-Hearted Club," which I was carrying off indiscriminately, without my knowlege. (*takes the shuttlecock out of his pocket and offers it to* MRS. L.) Allow me, ma'am, to place the fugitive in your hands. By-the-by, if you're partial to shuttlecock, I'd be proud to have game with you.

MRS. LOVE. I don t play shuttlecock, Major.

MAJOR. That's a pity, for shuttlecock is a foine invigorating and philosophic game, which teaches us to bear the bangs of fortune with indifference. You have an elegant figure for battledore, Mrs. Lovebird. (*about to embrace her.*)

MRS. LOVE. Major! Major! I must not listen to another word from you. Are you going?

MAJOR. I'm gone, madam. (*going, stops*) But you'll excuse me for remarking that if there was any way of rethreating without dishonor—except your garden wall, it would be a great relief to my mind.

MRS. LOVE. There's the garden gate; you'll find the key on the mantelpiece.

MAJOR (*taking the key from the mantelpiece*). Then you really wish to deprive yourself of my agreeable company?

MRS. LOVE. (*sentimentally*). Ah! Major, we cannot always consult our own inclinations. My will must bend itself to my duty. (*laughter, and female voices outside,* R.)

MAJOR. What's that?

MRS. LOVE. (*in a suppressed voice*). Two of our young members, who, I am ashamed to say, sometimes forget their griefs in the hollow echoes of mirth.

MAJOR. Poor things! I'll lave them in their sorrow. (*going.*)

MRS. LOVE. Mind you shut the garden gate after you.

MAJOR. Don't be afraid, I'll lock the door before I go out! [*Exit back.*

MRS. LOVE. A more impudent, irrepressible man than that Irish Major I never met;—so agreeable, too, and fascinating. But I'm glad he's gone, for I felt I required all my firmness to maintain the decent dejection of my widowed condition. Heigho! perhaps he was right—the crushed heart needs consolation and support.

Enter from R., CISSY MAYTHORNE *and* CAMILLA SPOONER, *the former humming a lively air, and dancing.*

MRS. LOVE. Miss Maythorne, my love, the "Broken-Hearted Club" don't dance. 'Tis against our rules.

CISSY M. Oh! I'm always forgetting those awful rules, and fancying that I'm not so utterly wretched as I ought to be.

CAM. S. But we try all we can.

CISSY M. Sometimes I fancy I'm in a crowded ball-room, listening to the delicious strains of Coote's band, surrounded by eager candidates for my hand in the next waltz. Ah! (*placing her hand on her heart*) that pang reminds me of the faithless Charles Pleydell.

MRS. LOVE. Smell my *sal volatile*, dear, and tell me how he was faithless. (*gives smelling-salts bottle.*)

CISSY M. He danced one evening with that odious flirt, Flora Freke. No girl of proper spirit could endure such a slight, so I told him plainly

what I thought of his conduct. He huffed—I pouted—and finally we agreed to part forever.

MRS. LOVE. And you, my dear Miss Spooner; your young affections, too, have been blighted in the blossom.

CAM. S. Cruelly blighted! I do not blush to say that I loved Frank Flexor, and I believe Frank adored me as much as any medical student of Guy's could; but I found that I only shared his affections.

CISSY M. Oh! a rival?

CAM. S. Yes; and it was humiliating to discover that my rival was a short, black, ugly little pipe.

CISSY M. The unsentimental wretch! I hope you dismissed him.

CAM. S. Of course I did, with a request that he should never appear in my presence again. In ten minutes I had a telegram from him informing me that my letter had so cut him up that he had retired to Southend to die, and had bequeathed his miserable remains to the College of Surgeons. I dropped a silent tear, 'twas all that I could bestow, upon his mournful lines, and hastened to bury my sorrows in this calm retreat.

Enter PERKINS, L.

PERK. Oh! please, 'm, a young man from Broadwood's is come to tune the piano, and there's another party from Mr. Pendlum, the watchmaker, to put the clock to rights.

MRS. LOVE. Why, bless me! the piano was tuned only last week, and the clock is in excellent order. However, show them in, Perkins.

[*Exit* PERKINS, L.

CISSY M. I'm sure we all go like clockwork in this house.

Re-enter PERKINS, L., *followed by* CHARLES PLEYDELL, *a pianoforte tuner, wearing spectacles, and by* FRANK FLEXOR, *a clockmaker's assistant, wearing a linen apron tucked aside, and carrying a green-baize bag.*

CH. PLEY. (*aside to* FRANK F.) You go first, Frank.

FRANK F. (*aside to* CH. PLEY.) Not at all; the artist before the mechanic. (*pushes* PLEYDELL *forward.*)

CH. PLEY. (*takes off his hat to* MRS. LOVE., *and speaks aside to* CISSY M.). Miss Maytho ne.

CISSY M. (*starting; and apart*). Charles Pleydell!

CAM. S. (*recognizing* FRANK; *and apart*). 'Tis Frank himself.

MRS. LOVE. (*to* PLEYDELL). I fear you have made some mistake, sir; the piano has been so lately tuned.

CH. PLEY. Pardon me, madam. The abnormal state of the anemometer, with the rapid fall of the thermometer, and a total absence of ozone in the atmosphere, indicates a sudden change in the condition of all legal and musical instruments. Allow me to demonstrate the curious fact to you. (*goes to the piano, and strikes several discords upon the keys*) You perceive, madam; not a note in tune. We must have a *ne exeat regno* on the velocipede of the minor key, and 'twill require a day at least to procure perfect unanimity amongst these chords. (*striking the keys.*)

MRS. LOVE. But Mr. a—a. Mr.——

CH. PLEY. Buffer, ma'am—my name's Buffer.

MRS. LOVE. Mr. Buffer, I must say I don't quite comprehend your scientific terms.

CH. PLEY. It is not essential, madam, that you should. People generally believe what they don't understand better than what they do, and, so believe in the artist who tunes your piano. (*striking the piano keys.*)

MRS. LOVE. (*aside*). He's uncommonly clever. (*she goes up the stage—*

CAMILLA SPOONER *comes to fire-place,* L. *and pretends to arrange the flowers in a vase on a mantelpiece, while* FRANK FLEXOR *seems to be examining the chimney clock.*)

CH. PLEY. (*aside to* CISSY M.). I must have two minutes to say my heart is (*tuning, aloud*) flat!

CAM. S. (*aside to* FRANK F.). What on earth brings you here? I thought you were dead by this time.

FRANK F. (*aside to* CAMILLA). So I should be, but Southend is so slow that it takes a man a lifetime to die there.

MRS. LOVE. (*coming down front*). Young man, young man, don't touch that clock; there's nothing the matter with it.

FRANK F. (*at table, front*). Allow me to differ with you, madam; there's a serious dislocation of the main spring. (*shaking the clock*) The machine is in a very shaky condition—complete internal derangement—breakdown in the balance wheel—nervous system sadly shattered.

MRS. LOVE. Good gracious! You are destroying the clock, sir.

FRANK F. Not at all, madam; the case requires vigorous treatment. (*shakes the clock violently; at the same time* PLEYDELL *makes a prodigious discord on the piano.*)

CH. PLEY. (*aside to* CISSY). 'Tis vain to struggle with my fate. (*aloud*) The soft pedal don't act. (*aside to her*) I cannot say, farewell. (*crash on the piano.*)

MRS. LOVE. (*clapping her hands on her ears*). What a horrid crash! (*goes up the stage.*)

CH. PLEY. (*aside to* CISSY M.). Say that you forgive me; tell me that we shall meet again, in a better world, at a *soirée dansante* in Belgravia, next winter. Swear on the tomb of your ancestors that you will dance the first waltz with me.

CISSY M. (*aside to* CH. PLEY., *and extending her arm in act of swearing*). I swear with pleasure. (*recollecting herself, coldly*) I mean—no—certainly not!

FRANK F. (*aside to* CAM. S.). Ah! you will repent your cruelty, Camilla, when the heart that adores you has ceased to beat. (*holds the clock to his ear*) There's not a stir in it now.

MRS. LOVE. (*coming down*). Will you put down that clock, sir? I'm surprised Mr. Pendlum should send a person here who apparently knows nothing of his business.

FRANK F. Pardon me, madam; I've made horological anatomy my peculiar study, and if you'll allow me to explain to this young lady the effect of a compound fracture of the *os humerus*——

MRS. LOVE. No, sir, I'll not allow you; but I desire that you take yourself away directly.

FRANK F. My honor will not permit me to quit this house, madam, until I have repaired the injury which this valuable timepiece has sustained. (*he places the clock on table,* C., *sits at table, and takes hammer and tools out of green bag, begins to hammer at the clock.*)

MRS. LOVE. Oh, dear! oh, dear! there's nothing the matter with it! this is dreadful. (*goes up stage.*)

CH. PLEY. (*aside to* CISSY M.). Say not that we must part, 'twould break my heart strings. (*he strikes the piano violently*) There are three of them gone at once.

MRS. LOVE. That piano-tuner will drive me distracted. [*Exit into garden.*

FRANK FLEXOR *and* CAMILLA SPOONER *retire into recess of window,* R. U. E.,

CH. PLEY. (*to* CISSY M.). You know that my heart has been devoted to you alone.

CISSY M. I know nothing of the sort. Were you not dying for Flora Freke? You danced with her twice the same night.

CH. PLEY. Twice! and I have survived it. Let me explain how it occurred. (FRANK FLEXOR *and* CAMILLA S. *come down from window*, R. U. E. CH. PLEYDELL *and* CISSY M. *go up stage conversing apart, and go into recess of window*, R. U. E.)

FRANK F. (*to* CAMILLA). Is there no sacrifice I can make that may convince you of the strength of my passion? Bid me pay my tailor's bill, shave my moustache, or break my cherished meerschum before your eyes!

CAM. S. Would you indeed do that?

FRANK F. Would I! Let me hasten to the nearest magistrate to make an affidavit of the fact. (*going*, CAMILLA S. *restrains him.*)

CAM. S. It is unecessary; I believe the simple assurance of your love, (*timidly*) and if my hand be worth your acceptance——

FRANK F. My acceptance! Certainly, if you desire it. At three months for any amount.

CAM. S. Ah, we should be so happy, Frank, but for one trifling circumstance. I'm awfully wretched.

FRANK F. You—you wretched! Oh, joy, oh, rapture! (*she weeps*) Hah! you weep—you weep for me. Let us weep together, and fly to some wilderness and be miserable for the rest of our lives.

CAM. S. How delightful that would be! (*they go up the stage and converse apart in the garden, without being out of view.* CH. PLEYDELL *and* CISSY M. *come down from window*, R.)

CISSY M. Do not tempt me, Charles, to forsake this tranquil abode, where our lives have been so serenely stupid. Do not urge me to break the resolution I have taken to live and die with my companions in sorrow. What would they think of me—what would they say, were I to desert them?

CH. PLEY. Oh! if you have scruples I must respect them, but I can't help thinking how the Park will have lost it's most charming equestrienne.

CISSY M. (*sadly*). Ah! who will ride my beautiful little Arab?

CH. PLEY. That attracted only less admiration than his fair mistress.

CISSY M. Ah! the delicious recollection of an exhilarating canter attended by a brilliant *cortege* of cavaliers. (*sighs*) Heigho! what am I saying? I should remember I have taken leave of those frivolous pleasures forever!

Enter LOUSIA LIPSCOMBE, R. *She appears flurried, at the same time* CAMILLA *and* CISSY *come down stage*, R. *and* L.

LOU. LIPS. Good gracious, 'tis he!

CAM. S. } What is the matter?
CISSY M. } What has happened?

LOU. LIPS. (*agitated*). He's come! I saw him cross the road; I heard his knock at the door.

CAM. S. (R. C.). His? Whose?

LOU. LIPS. (*mysteriously*). Arthur Chomley's.

CISSY M. (L. C.). The wretch who jilted you?

CAM. S. The monster who trifled with your affections?

LOU. LIPS. The same. But don't be afraid that I shall shame the "Broken-Hearted Club." I'll neither see him, hear him, or speak to him.

[*Exit* R. 1 E.

PERKINS *enters* L. 1 E.

PERK. No, sir; I beg your pardon, you mustn't, it's contrary to orders. Gentlemen ain't admitted on no business whatever. No, sir, you mustn't, indeed. Oh, dear!

Enter ARTHUR CHOMLEY, L., *forcing past* PERKINS, *who endeavors to prevent his entrance.*

PERK. Mistress will be angry, sir, and I shall lose my place.

[*Exit* L. 1 E.

ARTHUR CH. I assure you, ladies, I am not a bird of prey, pouncing upon a flock of trembling doves. My intentions are of the most harmless character—merely to speak to a young lady. (*aside*) I saw her retreating into that room. Hem! she avoids me, I'll try if I can't draw her from her concealment. (*aloud*) A young lady whom I pronounce in the face of the world to be a heartless flirt—an accomplished jilt—I say, a jilt.

Enter LOUSIA LIPS., R.

LOU. LIPS. (*passionately*). Do you dare to call me a flirt, sir, a jilt—a jilt? (CISSY *and* CAMILLA *alarmed, go up stage.*)

ARTHUR C. (*laughing*). All a trick, my dear Lou., to make you put in an appearance. And now that we have met, we shall never part again.

LOU. LIPS. Mr. Chomley, I consider this intrusion impertinent, and you language insulting. What would Miss Lombard say to this treason.

ARTHUR C. Oh! you have heard and believed that ridiculous *canard.* Dismiss it from your mind. You, and you only, have been the object of my affections. Will you now banish me from your presence? (*drops on his knees and takes her hand*) will you spurn me if here, kneeling at you feet, I dedicate to you the remainder of my life?

LOU. LIPS. Dear Arthur! (*he rises*) What is to become of the "Broken-Hearted Club?"

ARTHUR C. Let them follow our example, Lou. (*embraces her.*)

At the same moment PLEYDELL *and* FLEXOR *start from behind the curtain; the former places his arm round* CISSY'S, *and the latter round* CAMILLA'S *waist.* MRS. LOVEBIRD *enters. The young ladies start in confusion from their lovers.*

MRS. LOVE. (*screaming*). Robbers! Fire! Murder! Somebody help! The house is full of robbers and burglars! Oh! help! (C.)

ARTHUR C. Don't be alarmed, madam. (*approaching* MRS. LOVE.)

CH. PLEY. Our designs are honorable. (*approaching* MRS. LOVE., *same.*)

MRS. LOVE. Don't come near me.

Enter from garden at back, MAJOR MCCOOL.

MAJOR (*coming down*). What's the matter? Who's been murdered?

MRS. LOVE. (*throwing herself into the* MAJOR'S *arms,* C.). Oh! Major! heaven has sent you to save us. You'll defend us, won't you?

MAJOR. To the last drop of me blood.

MRS. LOVE. And you'll protect the plate?

MAJOR. To the last spoon, me darling!

ARTHUR C. I'm sorry the Major's gallantry will not be put to the test on this occasion. The only object of which I would rob the "Broken-Hearted Club" is this young lady's hand, (LOUSIA *gives him her hand*) which you perceive she gives me freely.

CH. PLEY. (*taking* CISSY'S *hand*). Here is the prize for which I dared to tread this forbidden ground.

FRANK F. (*taking* CAMILLA'S *hand*). And this is the only excuse I can offer for my temerity.

MRS. LOVE. Ladies, ladies, can this be true ?
CISSY M. } Pray don't be angry with us.
CAM. S. } Indeed we could not help it.
LOU. L. } But we're very sorry.
ALL. Oh ! very !

Enter IDA PARKE *and* ARAMINTA WILLOWBY, R. *All the others, except* MRS. LOVEBIRD, *go up.*

IDA PARKE (R. C.). Mrs. Lovebird, (*produces a letter*) I have just received this letter from poor Tom Hazelton, in which he begs me to forgive and forget his absurd jealousy, and altogether expresses himself in such an humble and penitent strain that I fear I must grant his petition and retire from this delightful retreat——

ARA. WILL. Where we enjoyed such sweet serenity of soul; but the truth is, I have just learnt from a friend that I have wronged Stanley Graham. The darling fellow has ever been faithful to me. Heigho ! if marriage be my fate, I trust I may meet it with becoming resignation.

MRS. LOVE. And shall I be left alone, as the poet says, like the last rose of summer, to pine on the stem, when all my companions are wedded and gone ?

MAJOR (*coming forward*). Forbid it, all ye hymeneal gods ! There's a heart, Mrs. Lovebird, swelling beneath this military frock, which throbs for beauty in distress. Lay your blushing cheek, my dear madam, upon that manly pillow, and rest in paice upon it for the rest of your days!

MRS. LOVE. Ah! Major! I never thought to be led to the altar again, but your eloquence is so persuasive that I consent. (*gives him her hand*) There is my hand.

MAJOR (*kissing it*). Soft melting treasure. (*aside*) Five hundred a year at laste.

MRS. LOVE. (*to the audience*). Our little comedy is played out; and now, as we are all provided with partners, we will, if you have no objection, finish in the good, old-fashioned style, with a dance by the "BROKEN-HEARTED CLUB."

Dance by the characters.

CURTAIN.

COSTUMES (*English, present time*).

MAJOR MCCOOL.—Irishman. Black coat, split up behind from between tails to neck-band; light pants; sandy moustache, rather long; black hat, white vest.

FRANK FLEXOR.—Black coat, grey pants, hat; white apron, with upper flap and band, to go round the neck; the left hand lower corner tucked up at the waist.

CHARLES PLEYDELL.—Spectacles, black coat, light pants, hat.

ARTHUR CHOMLEY.—Military moustache, uniform, red sash from shoulder to hip; fatigue cap.

MRS. LOVEBIRD.—Lace cap, house dress.

CISSY MAYTHORNE.—Dark blue riding-habit and pantaloons to match; hat, whip; white gloves.

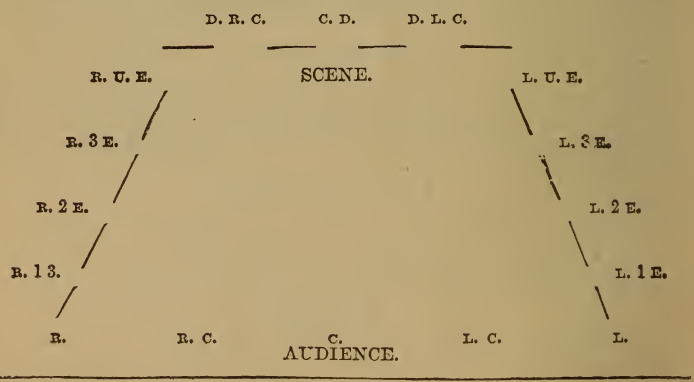
CAMILLA SPOONER.—Light dress, hair down, loose.

IDA PARKE, LIPSCOMBE, BROOK.—Light house-dresses.

PERKINS.—Blue dress, white cap and apron.

EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Actor is supposed to face the Audience.



L.	Left.	C.	Centre.
L. C.	Left Centre.	R.	Right.
L. 1 E.	Left First Entrance.	R. 1 E.	Right First Entrance.
L. 2 E.	Left Second Entrance.	R. 2 E.	Right Second Entrance.
L. 3 E.	Left Third Entrance.	R. 3 E.	Right Third Entrance.
L. U. E.	Left Upper Entrance (wherever this Scene may be.)	R. U. E.	Right Upper Entrance.
D. L. C.	Door Left Centre.	D. R. C.	Door Right Centre.

SYNOPSIS.

An elegant drawing-room is the place in which all the incidents of this piece transpire. Mrs. Lovebird, Araminta Willowby, Louisa Lipscombe, Serena Brooke, and Ida Park are all in different parts of the room, engaged in various lady-like employments, and conversing about the selfishness and tyranny of that monster, Man; and each of them indulges in retrospective sketches of "man's inhumanity to"—woman. They all solemnly vow to avenge the wrongs of their sex upon the opposite one. Camilla Spooner and Cissy Maythorne enter, laughing boisterously, and report that one Major McCool is dangling from the branches of a cherry tree in the garden. Mrs. Lovebird is deputed to release him, and bid him withdraw from the premises occupied by "The Broken-Hearted Club." Before she can release the Major he comes in, and by his honeyed blarneyisms gains the good-will of the lady before he *apparently* leaves the premises. Soon Charles Pleydell and Frank Flexor enter; they are disguised respectively as a piano-forte tuner and a clock maker's assistant. Cissy Maythorne and Camilla Spooner, who are in the apartment with Mrs. Lovebird when these two "frauds" enter, very soon recognize them as their old sweethearts, and indulge in reminiscences of their ball-room flirtations. Here a very lively and witty conversation ensues. Mrs. Lovebird being ignorant of the real character of the two disguised gallants, and failing to get rid of them, she retires to the garden. Louisa Lipscombe enters, much flurried, and telling Cissy M. that Arthur Chomley is at the door, and that she will not see the wretch who had trifled with her affections. Arthur C., however, forces his way in past the servant, and loudly denounces Louisa L. as a jilt. This brings the lady to face him; after a sharp dialogue the lady relents, and ends by allowing Arthur to embrace her. Pleydell and Flexor come from behind a curtain embracing their respective sweethearts, as Mrs. Lovebird comes in. This latter lady is horrified at the appearance of so many men, and sets up a violent screaming. With this Major McCool marches in from the garden, and the agitated Mrs. L. throws herself into his arms, calling loudly upon the gallant soldier to protect them all. Here Ida Parke and Araminta Willowby come on, announcing that they had just received letters explanatory from *their* lovers. Then follow mutual excuses and forgiveness. Everything becomes lovely, and the sprightly piece winds up with a dance by all the characters.

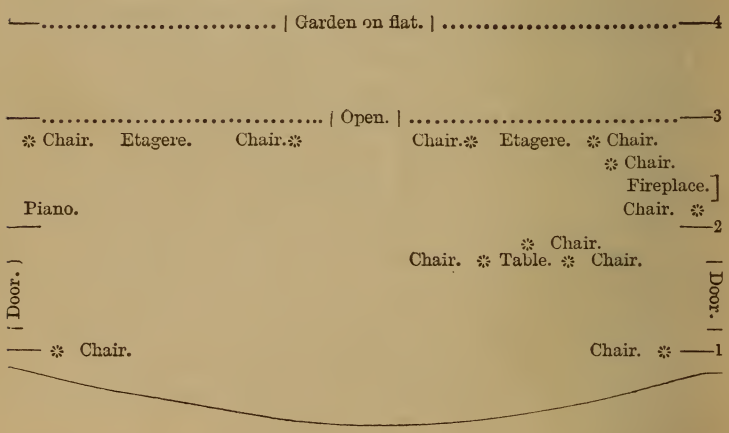
TIME OF PLAYING—FORTY-FIVE MINUTES.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Haymarket Theatre, London, January 16, 1868.

Major McCool, a retired Irish Major		Mr. Braid.
Charles Pleydell, of the Inner Temple		Mr. Walter Gordon.
Frank Flexor, of Guy's		Mr. Weatherson.
Arthur Chomley, of the Guards		Mr. H. Vincent.
Mrs. Lovebird,	Members of the Broken-Hearted Club.	Mrs. Chippendale.
Miss Louisa Lipscombe,		Miss Matthews.
Miss Ida Parke,		Miss Coleman.
Miss Araminta Willowby,		Miss Fanny Wright.
Miss Cissy Maythorne,		Miss Ione Burke.
Miss Camilla Spooner,		Miss Dalton.
Miss Serena Brook,		Miss E. Harrison.
Perkins,		Miss Lewin.

SCENERY.



Elegant room on four grooves; D.'s in L. and R. 1 E., practicable; open doorway in flat on three grooves. Carpet down. Clock and vases on mantel, L. 2 E. set.

PROPERTIES (*See "Scenery."*)

Rug, poker, shovel to fireplace; two vases and clock on mantel; newspaper for Mrs. Lovebird; whip for Miss Maythorne; books, card-basket, knick-knacks on tables and *etageres;* hammer and tools in bag for Flexor; crayon and paper on table, L. C. front, for Miss Willowby; battledores and one shuttlecock.

ONE TOO MANY FOR HIM.

SCENE.—*A comfortably furnished parlor in a country house. At back,* C., *a glass door* (*with windows extending half way down*), *through which a conservatory is seen,* R. *a table with writing materials—doors* R. *and* L. *Table, chairs, etc.*

NANCY (*discovered brushing a coat*). What pains gentlemen do take with themselves, when they come a-courting—they always put on bran new things. Now here's a han'som coat! a regular *lovyer's* coat! Ah! I've brushed a few lovyer's coats since I first came to service in this house. Poor young fellows! they come down here all in their Sunday best, looking like so many valentines, all brim full of love and hope and what not, but bless you, before they've been here a week, Mr. de Walker gives 'em the cold shoulder, and shows 'em the door as neat as ninepence, and Miss Isabella is as far off being married as ever. Ah, he's a rare enemy to marriages, is master!

Enter MR. DE WALKER, *door in flat,* C.

DE W. Nancy!

NANCY. Why I declare if master isn't up already!

DE W. Already! I've been awake ever since *four!* Mr.—a—a—(*irritably*) What the *devil's* his name, came down last night, didn't he?

NANCY. Mr. Brompton, sir? yes, sir! he arrived after all the family had gone to bed. John, the gardener, let him in, he said he missed the afternoon train by just *two minutes.*

DE W. I wish he had missed it altogether. (*anxiously*) But what's he like? *frightful, hideous,* eh?

NANCY. Law, sir, *I* don't know.

DE W. (*angrily*). Don't know? (*pointing to coat*) Haven't you been into his room to fetch his coat?

NANCY. Lawks, no sir! (*disdainfully*) Do you think I'd go into a gentleman's room while he was *in bed?* It was John the gardener who fetched it out!

DE W. He *snores!* eh? I'm sure John told you he *snored*—loudly, violently, repulsively, eh? and *wears a night-cap,* eh? an odious, unpicturesque *night-cap*—(*anxiously*) *eh?*

NANCY. Law, sir, how should I know.

DE W. (*much annoyed*). Senseless menial, you never know anything—away!

NANCY (*aside*). Ah, master's in one of his trantrums—he always is when anyone comes down to pop to Miss Isabella. (*opens door* R., *hastily throws coat in, crosses stage, and exit* L.)

DE W. (*alone soliloquizing*). Who would be a father! *who* would? (*to the*

audience) Oh, I thought I heard somebody say *he* would, and I shouldn't wonder if he would. There's a good deal to be said in favor of it—but there's *one* fatal drawback—in all probability he may have children—nay, perhaps an only child—an only daughter, like myself—no, I don't mean that, *I'm* an only daughter—I mean a daughter as I have—and in that case I give him notice that there's trouble in store for him! Let him take warning by *my* sad fate—yes, *I* have a daughter, a darling child, my only treasure, the apple of my eye. She lost her mother before she was a year old, and I became her solitary parent, and though I say it, she was the sweetest little thing you ever set eyes upon. But *cantankerous*—oh, very, in fact a more cantankerous baby I never knew. I don't mean to say that she was a bad child, oh dear no, quite the reverse, she was what old ladies call "as good as gold"—but the little monkey would have nothing to say to anyone but *me*; I must always be nursing her, feeding her, dressing her, in short I was transformed into a regular old nurse, without the wages! Never mind, *I* was happy, and *she* was happy, and we've been happy ever since. Well, on we went till time came to send her to school. But there the same difficulty arose. No school suited her, because papa wasn't with her. One after the other was tried, but all of no use. Fifteen different seminaries for young ladies in two years—with a dozen towels, knife, fork, and spoon to each—fifteen knifes, forks, and spoons, and a hundred and eighty towels—all swallowed up in two years! Then I had daily governesses, by the score, followed by resident governesses, and a pretty life *they* led me. Salary not so much an object as a comfortable situation, and I will do them the justice to say that *comfortable* they made themselves. Four meals a day were nothing at all. Such appetites I never saw, what appetites they had to be sure, and so *particular* too. Why, the last threatened to leave, because one day the *veal* was underdone, and I had to discharge the cook, who, by the bye, summoned me to the County Court for the balance of her wages, £4 15s. 9d.—and though I made oath that the *veal* was not underdone, the judge decided—But however, all this has nothing to do with the question, but the governesses bills *have*, for they were pretty stiff ones, I can tell you. Why, bless you, I had the girl taught French, German, Italian, music, flower painting on velvet, and every other elegant accomplishments, including the use of the globes—and what for, I should like to know? Now comes the beauty of he thing—why to bestow her upon the first puppy in lavender kids and patent leathers who chooses to take a fancy to her, and who may carry her off to the Antipodes for all I know, or for all he cares. Twenty years we have lived together in peace and tranquillity, doating upon each other, living for each other, not a thought *but* for each other—when all of a sudden, would you believe it, hang me if she doesn't begin talk about getting married, to talk about nothing *but* getting married, I call it *disgusting!* Married, indeed, just as though the ceremony didn't involve a total separation from her poor dear father—it's downright selfish. There are hundreds of girls that would suit any of the coxcombs as well—then why strip me of the only child I've got to my back. I can't see what all the young fellows see in her, for my part I'm sure she's as common-place a girl as anyone could wish—she's not clever, she's not a beauty, in fact she's of no use to anyone but the owner—but she happens to suit *me*, I've reared and fed her and taught her, and I've a right to her, yes, I have a *right* to her, indeed, I don't know what I am to do without her. Who is to sing me charming little songs, and play me "Home, sweet Home," with brilliant variations? (*rubbing his hands gleefully*) Hitherto, I must say I've hit upon a most ingenious method of getting rid of the troublesome young coxcombs who dare to propose for her, I receive them in the warmest and most cordial manner, I then dexter-

ously bring to light any trifling defects they may possess, and straightway report them to my daughter as faults of the *blackest* and most *hideous* description; my daughter assumes a becoming coldness of deportment, and before three days have elapsed, the young dogs discover that it's "no go!" (*chuckling*) and sneak back to town horribly discomfited—ha, ha, ha! very ingenious! (*uneasily*) I fear I shall find it a more difficult matter to get rid of this M.—Mr.—(*irritably*) what the plague's his name? the references are aggravatingly satisfactory, and what's worse, his suit *is* highly approved of by my sister Euphemia, and my sister Euphemia is rich and unmarried, two rather important considerations—however, I warrant he'll find me "*One too many for him*" before I've done with him! (*impatiently*) Now then! is the lazy lubber going to stop in bed all day? I'm longing to analyze his character, exaggerate his deficiencies, and send the intrusive Cockney packing back to his smoky metropolis!

Enter ISABELLA, L., *running*.

ISABEL. (*eagerly*). My dear papa, aunt tells me that Mr. Cymon Brompton came down last night! I'm *so* glad, for *he* is such a nice young man!

DE W. (*alarmed*). Nice young man! there's *no such thing!* the race is *extinct*—besides, my dear child, such expressions are highly improper in the mouth of a young lady. You are not of an age to form an opinion on such complicated subjects.

ISABEL. Why, pa, I'm nearly twenty—my friend, Miss Matilda Price was *married* at seventeen.

DE W. Absurd! nonsense! such *infantine* marriages never end well. Besides as regards this Mr.—Mr.—thingumerry—I've a strong presentiment that he will not turn out—a—a—the precise thing——

ISABEL. (*vexed*). Now *there* papa, there! I see you are *determined* to dislike everybody who pays me the slightest attention.

DE W. (*pretending to be much hurt*). Now that *is* an unjust remark, a *cruelly* unjust remark—I, who actually go about *beating up* husbands for you! *touting* for them, I may say! Why you've had no less than *nine* suitors introduced to you within the last *half year*, that's just *one* and a *half* a month—I'm sure many young ladies would be quite satisfied with so *liberal* an allowance!

ISABEL. But, pa, you *know* you sent them all away again!

DE W. Of course I did, the *selfish*, *interested* fellows—they were none of them *good enough* for you, my dear. No, no, I'm determined that when you do get a husband, he shall be a model spouse, a perfect *paragon* of marital perfections!

Enter EUPHEMIA, L.—*She is attired in a would-be juvenile and romantic style, and speaks throughout in a gushing and sentimental manner.*

EUPH. (*speaking as she enters*). The *silver* tea-urn, mind, and *all* the old *china!* (*eagerly to* DE WALKER) By the bye, brother, I wonder whether Mr. Brompton likes *smoked salmon!*

DE W. *How should I* know? You surely wouldn't have had me wake up the young man while he was snoring?

ISABEL. Snoring, pa!

DE W. Ah, to be sure! it's quite a pleasure to hear him—through the wall. (*aside*) Rub number *one*. (*aloud*) You wouldn't have had me wake up the young man on purpose to inquire whether he liked smoked salmon! (*significantly*) Why he'd have *sworn* at me from beneath his *cotton nightcap!*

ISABEL. Cotton nightcap! you *don't* mean to say he wears a cotton nightcap?

DE W. Ay! with a *tassel* to it as *long as my arm!* Nancy told me so. (*aside, chuckling*) Rub number *two!*

EUPH. (*severely*). Now Theophilus, you're beginning the old game, I see! but mark me, sir! you are aware that I enjoy a comfortable little income, and that (*simperingly*) although possessed of personal advantages certainly above mediocrity, I have heroically condemned myself to an unwedded existence solely to insure the fortune of our darling Bella. (*sentimentally striking attitude*) Like to the *shipwrecked mariner* who from his *desert rock* beholds——

DE W. Oh *hang* the shipwrecked mariner!

EUPH. As you please, sir, but you know our Bella's marriage is my darling project, and I am of opinion that Mr. Cymon Brompton is a most eligible candidate for Bella's hand; I trust therefore that you will not treat him as you have done all Bella's other suitors, whom you packed off like so many discharged lackeys; no, no, sir, I mean to keep a *very* sharp eye upon you this time.

ISABEL. (*aside*). And *so do I*, pa! *I* can tell you!

EUPH. Hush! here comes Mr. Brompton.

DE W. (*aside, grinding his teeth*). Hang the fellow!

Enter MR. BROMPTON, R.

Ah, my dear Mr. Brompton, good morning.

MR. B. (*bowing*). 'Pon my word, ladies, I have to apologize for making my appearance so late, but my nocturnal journey by coach and rail somewhat fatigued me.

EUPH. My dear Mr. Brompton, don't mention it. Theophilus, allow me to introduce Mr. Cymon Brompton.

DE W. (*shaking hands with exaggerated cordiality*). Delighted, I'm sure. (*aside*) Dangerous looking young dog!

EUPH. (*indicating* ISABELLA). My niece Isabella's acquaintance, you have already made.

MR. B. (*ardently*). Yes, during an ecstatic half-hour of rapturous polking! Ah! the report I had heard of Miss de Walker was flattering in the extreme, but believe me, I found the reality as superior to my fondest expectations as is—a—a—Venus of Praxiteles to a—a—a—a—*plaster of Paris nymph!*

EUPH. (*to* WALKER, *admiringly*). How refined, how *mythological!*

DE W. (*uneasily*). A—a—uncommonly mythological—but stop, stop, where have I met with that exquisite simile before. (*pretending to remember*) Ah! in the supplementary number of the Gentleman's Magazine for February, 1830, (*aside*) Rub number *three!*

EUPH. (*reproachfully*). Theophilus!

MR. B. (*aside, puzzled*). Why I concocted it *in the train* as I came down.

EUPH. Of *course*, Mr. Brompton, you intend to spend a few days with us—a week at least?

MR. B. A week! (*looking "unutterable things" at* ISABELLA) I feel already that nothing but *armed force* will ever induce me to leave *at all!*

DE W. (*aside, alarmed*). Confound the puppy's impudence!

Enter NANCY, L.

NANCY. Please, sir, Squire Merton is outside in his gig, he wants to speak to you and Miss Phemia, and hasn't a moment to stop.

EUPH. Squire Merton!

De W. Go, Euphemia! tell him I'll be with him directly! (*exeunt* Euphemia *and* Nancy, L.—*to* Brompton) My dear sir, you'll excuse us for two minutes.

Mr. B. Don't mention it. No ceremony with me—besides—(*gallantly*) I shall fill up the time most agreeably with Miss de Walker.

De W. (*aside*). Not if I know it! (*anxiously—seizing* Bella's *arm, and drawing her towards door—aloud*) A—a—unfortunately Bella has domestic duties——

Isabel. No, I haven't, pa!

De W. (*continuing, and drawing* Bella *after him*). Yes, you have, miss! urgent family matters—(*making signs to* Bella)—which require her immediate attention—you'll pardon our brief absence, my dear Sydenham.

Mr. B. Brompton, sir, Brompton!

De W. Ah, Brompton, to be sure. Come Bella. (*to* Brompton, *significantly*) A—a—you'll find the "Gentleman's Magazine" on the table.

[*Exeunt* L.

Mr. B. Hang the "Gentleman's Magazine!' I thought I was going to have a delicious *tete-a-tete* with the object of my affections—charming girl this Miss de Walker—she made such a violent impression upon me at a party in town that I have come a hundred and fifty miles per coach and rail, to offer my heart and hand. Hang me though, if I know what to make of that unpleasantly well read papa! I must be careful with this worthy gentleman—it strikes me he's inclined to make the most of my deficiencies; luckily they are not numerous—my failings only amount to two—the first is, over-susceptibility as regards the fair sex—it's a terrible failing in a lawyer, but I can't help it; the moment a young lady casts a side glance at me—*thus*—(*burlesque leer*) and articulates my Christian name—Cymon—with the Cy—why, then it's all over with me! I cease to be a solicitor, and straightway become a *pyrotechnist*, a Congreve rocket, a Catherine wheel, a volcano! Fault No. 2 is still less excusable in so nice a young man—I take snuff—yes! I blush to own it, but the incessant study of "Blackstone's Commentaries' has rendered me as devoted a lover of brown *rappee* as the veriest Highlander that ever stood at a tobacconist's door! By the bye, now that I'm alone, I'll just regale myself with a pinch—a pinch at the right moment is so very refreshing. (*produces snuff-box, and is luxuriously about to raise a pinch to his nose, when* De Walker *enters at back*, C.) Hallo here's the governor—I must conceal my petty vices! (*throws pinch of snuff away, and hurries box into his pocket.*)

De W. (*sneezing—aside*) Eh! by George, that looked uncommonly like a snuff-box. My daughter abominates young snuff-takers. Now if I could only convict him of the habit. (*advancing*) Indulging in a quiet pinch—eh?

Mr. B. Pinch—eh? I—oh, dear no (*coughing*) my cough's rather troublesome. (*coughing*) Ahem! ahem! I was just taking a voice lozenge! (*produces box from his other pocket*) Excellent things—have one?

De W. No, thank you. (*aside*) Voice lozenges—humbug! I don't believe a word of it! but I must conceal my hostile intentions beneath a mask of diplomatic politeness! (*assuming a bland expression*) My dear Pimlico——

Mr. B. (*sharply*). Brompton, sir, Brompton!

De W. Ah, Brompton, to be sure—my dear Brompton, you cannot imagine how charmed, how delighted I am to see you beneath my roof, domesticated as it were among my household gods——

Mr. B. (*looking at him suspiciously, and cautiously repeating after him*).

My dear Mr. De Walker, you cannot imagine how charmed, how delighted I am to see myself beneath your roof, domesticated as it were among your household gods.

De W. My sister has informed me of the object of your visit—I highly approve of it—there's my hand!

Mr. B. (*as before, cautiously*). Your sister has informed you of the motive of my visit, you highly approve to it—there's my hand.

De W. (*aside*). Why the fellow's a human poll parrot! (*aloud*) I admit that I was at first anything but favorably disposed towards you.

Mr. B. Oh, you admit that, do you?

De W. Yes—they say you've been a sad fellow in your time.

Mr. B. Now really, upon my life——

De W. (*continuing*). A very devil among the girls—eh! you sly young dog you! (*gives him a poke in the ribs.*)

Mr. B. You really shouldn't, De Walker. (*aside*) He's testing the extent of my juvenile indiscretions. (*aloud, with solemnity*) Mr. de Walker, as I trust I am on the eve of becoming a member of your family, I consider it my duty to lay bare to you my inmost soul!

De W. That's right, my boy—no ceremony with me, you know. (*aside, chuckling*) Some delicious confession is at hand!

Mr. B. Throughout my entire career, I have loved two women! (*walks up, looks all round room, behind window curtains, and under the table as though to see that no one is listening.*)

De W. Two women! (*anxiously*) and they were——

Mr. B. (*taking* De Walker's *arm, leading him down and speaking mysteriously into his ear*). My mother and my old nurse!

De W. (*aside*). Confound him, no go again! Infernally sharp fellow this! (*aloud, affecting great cordiality*) My dear young friend, I'm delighted to meet with a young man of so exemplary a character. (*producing snuff-box*) I'll be down upon him this time! (*carelessly*) I rather think you said you did a little in this way?

Mr. B. (*forgetting himself and mechanically advancing his hand*) Right! (*recollecting himself*) What, snuff! Faugh! I—I abominate the insane practice!

De W. (*aside—vexed*) Devilish wide-awake! I'll try another tack. (*with affected heartiness*) Do you know, Hackney——

Mr. B. Brompton, sir, Brompton!

De W. Ah, Brompton—(*blandly*) do you know, Brompton, there's a-something about you which pleases me uncommonly (*vaguely*) there's an air of a—a—a—sort of—a kind of a—a—I don't exactly know what, that tells me, you're precisely the husband for my daughter—(*significantly*) for I must tell you that, with her peculiar character—

Mr. B. Peculiar—not very peculiar I hope?

De W. My dear young friend! I consider it my duty—my painful duty, to inform you that our darling Isabella has a few trifling defects——

Mr. B. (*aside*). A very transparent dodge this!

De W. The little angel is self-willed—stubborn, violent, extravagant, passionate, spiteful, and vindictive!

Mr. B. Precisely the qualities I have so long sought for in a young lady.

De W. (*astonished*). Eh?

Mr. B. The exact combination of peculiarities I most admire!

De W. Eh? Oh, then, of course—a—a—I—I've nothing more to say, (*aside—angrily*) I shall loose my temper with this fellow—he's up to everything! I must retire and concoct some inevitable trap wherein to catch this juvenile Machiavelli. (*aloud*) My dear Fulham——

Mr. B. Brompton, my dear sir, Brompton!

De W. Ah! I knew it was somewhere out that way. Excuse my leaving you—I have a very particular letter to write. (*walks up.*)

Mr. B. Write away, don't mind me.

De W. (*coming back*). I wonder now whether the fellow smokes—Isabella abominates tobacco—I'll just try. (*turning round suddenly, pretending to fumble in his pocket*) Dear, dear, how provoking! I've left my case up stairs—you don't happen to have a cigar about you? (Brompton, *taken off his guard, hastily plunges his hand into his pocket*—De Walker *delighted, aside*) Ha, ha! he carries a case—I knew it!

Mr. B. (*suddenly perceiving the plant, deliberately draws forth his handkerchief, and calmly blows his nose*). Cigar, did you say? I never indulge in such things!

De W. (*aside, angrily*). Confound the fellow! I can't convict him of any fault whatever! to think that the exigencies of society compel me to behave politely to a puppy whom I yearn to send spinning out of my topmost garret window—but I'll be down upon him presently! (*with a violent attempt at cordiality*) *Au revoir!* Paddington, *au revoir!*

[*Exit at back*, c.

Mr. B. (*calling after him, angrily*). Brompton, sir, Brompton! (*alone*) By Jove, that was a sharp hand to hand encounter; luckily I've passed the ordeal victoriously. When he asked for a cigar I was very near producing my case, and when he proffered that tortoise-shell snuff-box, I was just within an ace of putting my foot in it; a little of the "ti illating mixture" at the right moment is so very refreshing! (*looks round*) The coast seems clear, I'll just try whether pinch No. 2 will safely reach its destination. (*luxuriously helping himself to a pinch.*)

Enter Isabella *with nosegay in her hand*, L.

Isabel. (*speaking off*). Yes, aunt, directly!

Mr. B. (*throwing away his pinch—vexed*). Confound it! I must give up all idea of "rappee" till the day after the wedding—(*irritably*) and then I'll take a quarter of a pound right off! (*carefully scrapes snuff from carpet with his foot, for fear* Isabella *should notice it.*)

Isabel. (*placing nosegay in vase on table*). Well, Mr. Brompton, you and pa seem to have had a long talk together.

Mr. B. (*still endeavoring to scrape away snuff*). Oh, yes, a most interesting conversation—full of incidents!

Isabel. (*eagerly*). Has he said anything to you about going away?

Mr. B. Going away? no! (*alarmed*) you surely don't anticipate—I—I'm not without my faults, I know, but——

Isabel. Faults! hush! not a word about faults here, on the contrary if you have any, pray conceal them as carefully as possible.

Mr. B. What! even from you?

Isabel. Of course, I don't trouble you with mine!

Mr. B. That would be quite unnecessary! your papa has favored me with a detailed list of them; among the prominent items were stubbornness, extravgance, revenge and other *Lucretia Borgia-like* peculiarities!

Isabel. Now, that's too bad of pa, he's at his old tricks I see. (*anxiously*) But you didn't believe him, did you, sir?

Mr. B. Believe him! my dear Miss de Walker, I flatter myself I know how to distinguish a rosebud from a thristle!

Isabel. Oh, sir!

Mr. B. (*aside, complacently*). It strikes me they haven't read that in the "Gentleman's Magazine." (*aloud, fervently*) No! my dear Miss de Walker all that I believed, all that I will ever believe is that you are good, lovely, amiable, irresistible!

IRABEL. Oh, sir!

MR. B. May I then indulge the fond hope, that if I obtain your father's consent I may venture a—a—to—a—a——

ISABEL. I almost think you may—(*eagerly*) but on one condition, sir, you'll promise——

MR. B. Proceed, proceed!

ISABEL. Never to wear a cotton night-cap more!

MR. B. A cotton what?

ISABEL. It's so very unromantic!

MR. B. A cotton night-cap?

ISABEL. Yes, they never wear them in novels.

MR. B. I solemnly swear I never perpetrated anything so unpoetical in all my life.

ISABEL. What? not with an interminable tassel?

MR. B. Neither with nor without anything of the kind.

ISABEL. Then it was a base invention of my father's, sir! I have deeply wronged you, forgive me, Mr. Cymon——

MR. B. Cymon! she called me Cymon! a distinct Cymon with the Cy—. Waterloo crackers are exploding in every vein! (*aloud, passionately*) Sylph-like being, admiration would be a cold expression with which to describe the sentiments that you have awakened in this breast, love, adoration! no, they won't do either; liquid lava, Greek fire are more the style of thing. (*takes her hand, and kisses it several times.*)

Enter DE WALKER, *at back*, C.

DE W. (*throwing up his hands in astonishment*). What do I behold—kissing my daughter's hand—(*aside*) a first-rate pretext! I'll quarrel with him, and get rid of the fellow that way. (*tragically*) Base pettifogger! is it thus you betray the laws of hospitality? (*takes his daughter's arm and draws her away.*)

MR. B. Base what?

DE W. (*to* ISABELLA). What a shock it must have been to my BELLA'S feelings.

ISABEL. No, it wasn't, pa!

MR. B. Of course it wasn't! why I was just going to pop.

DE W. You'll not pop here, sir—perfidious six-and-eight-pence.

MR. B. Six-and-eight-pence!

DE W. Yes, sir, and let me take this opportunity of informing you that though she is too polite to say so, my daughter hates the very sight of you!

ISABEL. Oh, my dear papa——

DE W. There, you hear that—she says she detests you!

MR. B. Shades of Littleton-upon-Coke, I can't stand this!

DE W. Not another word, sir; I confess that I was strongly prepossessed in your favor, but after such an outrageous violation of decorum—the sooner you pop out of my house, sir, the better. (*aside*) That's the style!

MR B. Very good, sir, I will pop out of your house—I'll pop home again without further delay.

DE W. Pop, sir, pop!

MR. B. I'll fetch my carpet-bag, and leave this ill-mannered locality instanter. (*to* ISABELLA *sentimentally*). Beauteous but too fleeting illusion, I bid thee farewell forever. [*Exit* BROMPTON, *into room*, R.

DE W. (*aside, chuckling*). Ha, ha! I flatter myself I've settled his business for him!

Enter MISS EUPHEMIA, *at back*, C.

EUPH. Why, bless me, what is all this noise about?

ISABEL. It's pa, who has just told Mr. Brompton to pop home again.

EUPH. Theophilus, what do I hear? What has the young man done to receive such treatment?

DE W. I blush to repeat his offence before ladies—he has actually——

EUPH. Actually what?

DE W. Actually dared to kiss Isabella's hand without gloves!

EUPH. Pitiful *subterfuge!* I tell you what it is, Theophilus—Mr. Brompton and I will leave this house together! (*walks up.*)

DE W. (*alarmed*). Euphemia!

ISABEL. My dear aunt——

EUPH. And as for my fortune! I have half a mind to get married myself.

DE W. What?

EUPH. Yes, (*hysterically*) and—and have a very large family!

DE W. You wouldn't be guilty of such a thing!

EUPH. You'll see, sir, Squire Merton has proposed to me twice already.

DE W. You wouldn't leave your own, dear Theophilly—philly——

ISABEL. My dear aunt, for my sake——

EUPH. If I relent, 'tis on the express condition that Mr. Brompton remains here, and that you make him a sweeping apology for the treatment he has received.

DE W. (*starting and buttoning his coat violently*). *I* make an apology!

EUPH. Yes, sir, an immediate apology—see, here he comes; now, sir, an apology, or I'll leave the house (*tragically*) forever.

Re-enter BROMPTON, *with carpet-bag*, R.

MR. B. Ladies, your most obedient—Mr. De Walker, (*majestically*) I wish you a very good morning!

DE W. (*stiffly*). The same to you, sir, and a—a—many of them.

EUPH. (*to* DE WALKER). Very well, sir! (*calling servant*) Nancy, Nancy!

ISABEL. Pa! you really ought——

DE W. (*aside*). I shall choke with rage, I know I shall. (*aloud*) Mr. Brixton, a—a——

MR. B. (*bawling angrily*). Brompton, sir, Brompton!

DE W. Ah, Brompton, a—a—you don't mean to say you're going already, Brompton, why—(*looking at his watch*) the train isn't due for thirty-three minutes.

MR. B. Sir, there are situations in the life of man, when his dignity requires that he should wait—at the station!

DE W. You persist, then—(*to* LADIES) you see he persists—it would be the height of impoliteness in me to detain him.

EUPH. Indeed, sir! (*walking up*) then, as I have already observed, this gentleman and I leave the house together.

DE W. (*grinning with rage, but attempting to assume a bland manner*). I shall choke, I know I shall. (*aloud*) Why, what a resolute, uncompromising young fellow you are. Come come, now! (*coaxingly*) won't you make up with papa Walker, eh?

MR. B. You called me a pettifogger.

DE W. I was playful—I—I meant solicitor.

MR. B. You alluded to me as six-and-eight-pence.

De W. A harmless metaphor—a mere figure of speech—the idea of a man's being angry at being called six-and-eight-pence; why the Queen might just as well be offended because we call her a *sovereign*—ha, ha, ha! not bad, eh? Come now, allow me—(*takes carpet-bag from him, aside*) I—I'll be down upon him presently. (*puts carpet-bag near table.*)

Euph. Ah, there now, that's as it should be, and as an earnest of this happy reconcilation—(*gushingly*) I propose that, in our presence, Mr. Brompton shall bestow a chaste salute upon his future bride.

Mr. B. An excellent idea.

De W. Eh, eh? what's that? (Brompton *kisses* Isabella) Oh! (*in his excessive rage* De Walker *kicks over a chair.*)

Euph. Why, brother, what are you doing?

De W. Oh, nothing, nothing at all! I—I'm enjoying this little family picture! (*aside*) I only wish I was a mad dog for just two minutes!

Enter Nancy.

Nancy. If you please, miss, breakfast is ready.

Euph. Isabella, take Mr. Brompton's arm.

Mr. B. (*to* Isabella, *offering his arm*). Miss de Walker, may I be permitted the transcendent felicity——

[*Exeunt* Brompton *and* Bella *into breakfast-room.*

Euph. (*at door*). Come, Theophilus. [*Exit.*

De W. (*aside*). I—I'll be with you directly. (*alone, angrily*) This will never do! I've met my match at last—I was one too many for all the rest, but if I don't mind, I shall find this fellow *one too many for me!* he will marry Bella under my very nose, in spite of me! the *Vandal*, the *Visigoth*, is gradually advancing upon my daughter like the barbarians of old upon the Roman empire. (*walks to and fro*) What's to be done? will no one smypathize with a bereaved parent?

Enter Nancy, L.

Nancy. Please, sir, breakfast is a-getting cold.

De W. Don't bother me about breakfast. (*to* Nancy, *fiercely*). What's to be done, I say, to arrest the progress of this seductive solicitor, this ruthless espouser?

Nancy. Law, sir, how should I know?

De W. (*struck with a sudden idea*). Stay! a brilliant idea! this girl is obtuse but good-looking, she shall be the instrument with which I'll ruin the fellow's reputation. (*aloud*) Nancy!

Nancy. What, sir?

De W. Do you perceive yonder *Hun*, yonder *Ostrogoth*, coolly enjoying his breakfast? (*pointing through open door*, L.)

Nancy. What, young missis's young man?

De W. How dare you allude to him in any such capacity! (*emphatically*) Now mark me, Nancy—within half-an-hour from this, by hook or by crook, by fair means or by foul, you must prevail upon that young man to kiss you.

Nancy. Kiss a gentleman! (*shocked*) Lawks, sir, you don't mean it!

De W. Mean it, girl! I command, I ordain it; there's a sovereign for you, and you shall have another as soon as the operation is over!

Nancy. Please, sir, I couldn't think of such a thing—I really couldn't!

De W. Consent immediately, or I give you warning on the spot!

Nancy. (*taking sovereign*). Well, I suppose if I must, I must. (*going*) Things is coming to a pretty pass, when respectable young female 'ouse-maids is obliged to kiss the young men visitors!

De W. A good loud one, mind. Hush! retire! here comes my sister.

Nancy (*as she goes out*). Well, I never! master's a-goin' out of his senses; but if the gentleman hadn't been so nice-looking I declare I'd never have done it, that I wouldn't! [*Exit* L.

Enter Euphemia, L.

Euph. My dear Theophilus, what are you thinking of? the idea of leaving us all alone at breakfast with Mr. Brompton!

De W. (*with serio-comic earnestness*). Breakfast, I've had my breakfast, alas! I have just made a discovery which will serve me for breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper, for the next week to come!

Euph. Theophilus, you terrify me. What has happened?

De W. (*in a hollow voice*). That precious *portege* of yours is making love to our maid-servant Nancy, here, under our very nose!

Euph. Impossible!

De W. She has just confessed it herself. The vile Lothario gave her five shillings this morning for brushing his coat, and offered to stand half-a-sovereign if she'd only tie his cravat for him!

Euph. Pshaw! instances of pure good nature.

De W. Good nature! why he's kissing her in every corner of the house, is that good nature?

Euph. Theophilus! give me but proof of this, and I abandon the deceitful young man forever.

De W. Proof! (*aside, looking off*). Here he comes, closely followed up by Nancy. (*aloud*) Proof! I rather think you said proof; retire with me behind yonder door, and you shall have ample proof of his Don Juan-like behavior. Quick! they come! (*exeunt at back*, C., *partially closing the glass door, through which they are seen peeping.*)

Enter Brompton *followed by* Nancy, L.

Mr. B. (*aside*). Remarkably communicative hand-maiden this! (*aloud*) And so you say, you are tired of living down in the country?

Nancy. Yes, please, sir, I should like a place up in London much better; I do so long to see London!

Mr. B. But what would your sweethearts down here say, if you were to abandon them.

Nancy. Sweethearts! lawk, sir, (*tittering*) I ain't got no sweethearts.

Mr. B. Nonsense, don't tell me, a pretty girl like you—(*aside*) Now I look at her she is an uncommonly pretty girl.

Nancy. Besides I don't care about country-going sweethearts, I don't.

Mr. B. A soul above bumpkins, I see.

Nancy (*playing with the corner of her apron*). I should like a smart London lover. (*giggling with affected shyness*) He, he, he!

Mr B. (*aside*). Amazing confidential. So you'd prefer a metropolitan adorer, would you?

Nancy. (*same play*). Yes, like—like—(*giggling and looking at* Brompton) He, he, he!

Mr. B. Like what?

Nancy (*with an affectedly stupid laugh*) He, he, he! Li-li-like you, sir.

Mr. B. (*aside, arranging his collar*). The devil she would! a—a—there's a great deal of discrimination about this girl.

Nancy. You're just my style, you are, he, he, he! (*edges close up to* Brompton *as though inviting him to kiss her.*)

Mr. B. Oh, I am, am I? (*aside*) By Jove this rustic beauty is unmis-

takably captivated by my personal appearance. 'Pon my life I almost wish it was Christmas time, and that there was a bit of *misletoe* handy!

NANCY (*aside*). He's a-going to take the hint. (*lays her head against* BROMPTON'S *shoulder.*)

MR. B. (*looking at* NANCY). So I'm just your style, am I? (*just at this moment the lock of door is heard to turn*—BROMPTON *looks round and perceives* DE WALKER'S *head looking through glass door*) Aha! the enemy is on the lookout. I see, this girl is a trap, a snare!

Totally altering his manner, he gravely takes NANCY *by the hand, and comes down with her.* DE WALKER *and* EUPHEMIA *enter meanwhile cautiously at back on tip-toe, and listen intently.*

Most excellent young female——

NANCY (*aside*). It's a-comin'.

MR. B. Did you ever read *Susan Hopley?*

NANCY. No, sir.

MR. B. (*raising his voice, sententiously*). Then permit me to inform you that maidenly reserve, and bashful modesty, are qualities which highly adorn a—a—a lady's maid!

NANCY. Sir!

MR. B. The ancient Romans had such decided notions on this subject that they built a temple to the goddess Vesta.

NANCY (*aside*). What the dickens is he talkin' about?

MR. B. Among the Egyptians also, it was a saying, that a damsel without decorum, was like an artificial rose—the flower without its fragrance.

EUPH. (*rushing forward, enthusiastically*) What exquisite sentiments, how beautiful! how noble! (*rapturously*) The flower without its fragance —how sweetly poetical! (*to* DE WALKER *reproachfully*) And this is the man you have dared to accuse, oh, brother, brother!

DE W. (*stammering*). I—I—it was Nancy. (*aside to* NANCY) You little idiot, give me back my sovereign!

NANCY. No, sir, please, sir, it wasn't my fault, sir! I told him he was just my style. (*aside, going*) I ain't a-goin' to give it back. [*Exit* L.

DE W. (*aside, stamping with rage*). The fellow bears a charm! he is invulnerable.

EUPH. Oh, what a dear, good young man—just like Thaddeus of Warsaw.

Enter ISABELLA, L.

(*enthusiatically*) Oh, Isabella, if you had only heard the charming sentiments just uttered by Mr. Brompton.

ISABEL. On what subject?

DE W. (*hysterically*). A—a—the ancient Egyptians, and artificial flowers. Ha, ha! delightful! pray favor us again; a second edition of the Egyptians by all means.

MR. B. With pleasure! (*sententiously*) Among that truly sagacious people, there existed a most excellent practice——

DE W. (*sarcastically*). How profound, how erudite!

MR. B. Whenever a respectable young Egyptain asked a young Egyptian lady's hand in marriage——

DE W. Eh?

MR. B. (*calmly*). It was customary to name the day forthwith!

EUPH. (*eagerly*). A very excellent practice too, and one which we shall do well to follow. (*to her brother*) What do you say to this day three months?

DE W. Impossible! much too soon, I haven't a dress-coat ready.

MR. B. I'll lend you one.

DE W. No, no, I'll fix the time—the ceremony shall be performed next Monday three years!

MR. B. Three years! (*violently*) Three *centuries!*

EUPH. Theophilus, mark me, I have already reminded you that I possess a moderate income——

DE W. I know—I know.

EUPH. (*gushingly*). That my persona. attractions are——

DE W. Above me diocrity—I'm perfectly aware of it.

EUPH. (*sentimentally*). That like to the shipwrecked mariner——

DE W. (*roaring furiously*). Hang the shipwrecked mariner!

EUPH. Theophilus! this marriage shall take place within three months, or I marry Squire Merton this day week!

DE W. The devil! no, no! (*aside*) She evidently means it—I must give in; what a bore it is to have a sister with money. (*aloud, affecting heartiness*) Well, Stratford, my boy——

MR. B. (*sharply*). Brompton, sir, Brompton!

DE W. (*affecting cordiality*). Brompton, my dear boy, I sympathize with your impatience. I—I consent, at my sister's request, to reduce the period to six months.

EUPH. Three, I said, three!

DE W. Well then three, three, three!

MR. B. (*shaking* DE WALKER'S *hand*). Ah, that's more the style of thing; I begin to believe you have some feeling about you; I will write at once to my friends informing them of the joyous tidings. (*aside, going*) Victory, victory, the day is mine. (*kisses* ISABELLA'S *hand and exits* R.)

ISABEL. Then am I really going to be married in good earnest? Oh, how nice! I'll run and write all about it to my old school-fellow, Gertrude. [*Exit* L., *running.*

EUPH. And I'll sit down and communicate the interesting intelligence to my worthy friend, Mistress Tabitha Tanbour. (*sits down at table and writes.*)

DE W. (*sitting down dejectedly*). It's all over, I'm a bereaved parent! They've regularly bullied me into it Odious visions of wedding breakfasts and post chaises and four rise up before me. (*sorrowfully*) No more charming little songs, no more "Home, Sweet Homes," with brilliant variations. I'm a childless father! (*vehemently*) But no! shall I consent basely to be triumphed over by a youthful attorney, incipient pettifogger? (*indignantly*) Perish the thought, I'll conceive some colossal hoax, some mammoth dodge, that shall render the marriage impossible. Let me see now—my sister Euphemia is credulity itself, she'll believe anything as long as it's romantic, sentimental, and extremely improbable! (*rising*) Yes, I'll straightway improvise a bit of fiction that shall eclipse the penny periodicals, and throw the Arabian Nights Entertainments completely into the shade! (*aloud, solmenly*) Sister, a word with you.

EUPH. (*rising, surprised*). What mournful tone is this! (*affectedly*) It curdles my blood? (*N. B.—A burlesque tragedy air must be imparted to the whole of the following scene.*)

DE W. Are we alone?

EUPH. We are.

DE W. Quite alone? (*looks cautiously all around the room and behind the curtains.*)

EUPH. Quite!

DE W. (*approaching his sister and seizing her by the hand*). Are you sure that this Hoxton, Brixton, Brompton I mean, is Brompton?

EUPH. Why, my dear brother, who else should he be?

DE W. I'll tell you! (*places, with much ceremony, chairs for himself and sister, they sit down*) Have you a smelling bottle about you?

EUPH. I have.

DE W. Then get it ready.

EUPH. I declare I'm sinking with terror.

DE W. The world believes I have only once been married, the world is wrong, twice have I led a blushing maiden to the altar!

EUPH. What do I hear?

DE W. You remember, when a young man, I spent three years in Wales.

EUPH. You did, you did.

DE W. Amid the mountain passes of that picturesque land, I became acquainted with a beauteous milkmaid; youth is impetuous, youth is rash, I loved and married her.

EUPH. Married a milkmaid! Oh, goodness gracious! (*applies smelling bottle.*)

DE W. Sainted Jenny ap Morgan Jones! (*handkerchief to his eyes.*)

EUPH. Proceed, I entreat.

DE W. Scarcely had our secret union endured two years when my angel wife fell headlong over a rugged precipice, leaving me the widowed proprietor of a little Welshman, (*sobbing*) the very picture of his father.

EUPH. (*drying her eyes*). Luckless orphan! (*crying.*)

DE W. (*aside, much relieved*). She has actually swallowed the little Welshman.

EUPH. What became of him!

DE W. (*aside*). Let me see, what the devil became of him? (*aloud, in broken accents*) Scarce had my darling son attained his fourth year, when intelligence reached me that while playing at marbles in front of the farm-house of Llan—Llan—Llandilodoodlums, he was stolen by a—a—band of gipsies.

EUPH. (*whimpering*). Poor little dear! Just like the Bohemian Girl! (*pathetically*) Unhappy brother, and have you never seen your offspring more?

DE W. (*in a hoarse whisper*). Never, *until to-day!*

EUPH. To-day? How? When? Where?

DE W. (*mock tragedy*). Here! not three minutes ago! The voice of Nature, aided—a—a—by an invisible, though unmistakable mark on his little finger, led to recognizing in the so-called Cymon Brompton (*with a burst of mock pathos*) my long-lost son!

EUPH. (*hysterically*). He! the—the little Welshman! Oh, goodness gracious! (*falling into a chair and going off almost into hysterics.*)

DE W. (*aside*). Striking incident that, rather. I was afraid it might prove too much for her. (*aloud, tragically turning to his sister*) Now do you appreciate my motives for opposing this marriage?

EUPH. (*overcome*). I do indeed! (*tragically*) Unhappy Bella, ill-fated youth.

DE W. Hush! he must never know the secret of his birth. I need not tell you that an insurmountable barrier prevents me from ever pressing my son, the little Welshman, to this paternal bosom.

EUPH. (*sentimentally*). Heart-rendering situation! Truth is indeed "stanger that fiction."

DE W. It is—it is, much stranger! (*mock tragedy*) Swear never to reveal the mystery I have confided to you!

EUPH. (*holding forth her hand*). I swear!

DE W. Hush! he comes. (*pathetically*) The little Welshman comes!

Enter BROMPTON *gayly*, R.

MR. B. Aha, my dear Mr. de Walker, I've finished my letter.

DE W. (*aside*). You'll have a postscript to add presently. (*aloud, pathetically*) Your hand, my s—, my *friend*, I mean—your hand! (*pressing* BROMPTON'S *hand with affected emotion*) Thanks, thanks!

EUPH. (*aside sympathetically*). His paternal emotion will betray him.

MR. B. (*aside, puzzled*). Why, what's he up to now?

DE W. Excellent young man, my sister has a—a—a little communication to make to you.

MR. B. To me?

EUPH. (*aside, looking from* DE WALKER *to* BROMPTON) There is a resemblance. (*aloud*) Ill-starred youth, heaven knows your union with my niece was my dearest wish; but——

MR. B. Why, what's the matter now?

EUPH. Fate has decreed it otherwise—this marriage is impossible!

DE W. Out of the question.

MR. B. The devil it is!

EUPH. Young man, adieu!

DE W. Farewell—forever!

MR. B. Eh?

DE W. I—I—I wish you many happy returns of the day—No! I—I mean I wish you a very good morning. (*going.*)

MR. B. (*who has stood in utter bewilderment, hastily following* DE WALKER). Gently—gently—one moment if you please! When an accepted suitor is bundled out in this unceremonious manner, it's the fashion to tell him the reason.

EUPH. (*turning away*). Ask my brother.

MR. B. (*to* DE WALKER). Oblige me by——

DE W. (*turning away*). Ask my sister!

MR. B. Madam, I entreat——

EUPH. Question me not!

MR B. (*bursting into a furious passion*). I'll not be made a shuttlecock of in this way! (*roaring*) I insist upon an explanation, or—(*seizing* DE WALKER *angrily by the collar*) or I'll know the reason why!

EUPH. (*tragically, stepping between them*). Hold wretched young man—(*with tremendous emphasis*) would you strike your *father?* (*tableau.*)

MR. B. My father!

DE W. (*awfully embarrassed*) I—I—I rather think somebody's calling me. (*endeavors to sneak off.*)

MR. B. (*detaining him*). Why what fresh piece of humbug is this?

EUPH. (*to* BROMPTON). Do you remember the farm of Landilodoodlums and the band of gipsies?

MR. B. Gipsies! (*aside*) By Jove, he's been at it again! I'll see how far he'll carry this joke. There's a portrait on the lid of lozenge box—(*produces it*) I'll pretend to humor the notion. (*affects to gaze with emotion on lid of box—pathetically*) Venerable parent! Do you recognize those features?

DE W. (*aside*). What does he mean? (*stammering violently but still affecting emotion*) Yes, yes! sainted Jenny ap Morgan Jones, these were thy lineaments!

MR. B. Why, you prince of humbugs, that's Jenny Lind!

EUPH. Jenny Lind!

DE W. (*incoherently*). A—a—it strikes me—a—a—there's a slight mistake—a—a—somewhere!

EUPH. Is it possible! Another subterfuge! Theophilus, I'm ashamed

of you, sir, and of myself too for believing such absurdities. You naughty—naughty—naughty man you! (*pinches him violently.*)

De W. (*roaring*). O-o-o-oh! (*hysterically*) A joke—a mere joke.

Enter Isabella *and* Nancy, L.

Isabel. Why, what's the matter with papa?

De W. Oh, nothing—nothing—a mere joke! (*aside*) My mammoth dodge has failed—my inventive powers are utterly exhausted—I must temporize! (*aloud*) Ha! ha! ha! don't you see it was an ingenious ruse to test the sincerity of our young friend's affection. Fate seems to have decreed that she should become Mrs. Dalston.

Mr. B. Brompton, sir, if you please.

De W. Ah, I knew it was some suburb. But I say, Brompton, out of sympathy to the feelings of a bereaved parent, you'll allow me to spend nine months out of the twelve with you?

Mr. B. Twelve months out of nine, if you like—you'll only have to step round the corner!

De W. Round the corner?

Mr. B. Yes, my father has bought me a solicitor's business in this very town.

De W. In this very town! Then why the devil didn't you say so before? By Jove, here have I been doing my very utmost to get rid of the very suitor I'd have given worlds to find. Here! (*joining their hands*) take her, my boy. The wedding shall come off this day month—no, this day week!

All. (*in chorus*). De-lightful!

Nancy. Miss Bella is goin' to be married in right down earnest—well I never!

De W. (*rubbing his hands gleefully*). Round the corner! (*aside*) I must make sure of this excellent young man. (*aloud*) A—a—what do you say to to-morrow morning?

Mr. B. (*surprised*). Eh?

De. W. (*aside*). I—I shall never have such another chance. (*exultingly*) Round the corner. (*aloud*) Couldn't the ceremony take place this afternoon?

Mr. B. I—I haven't a white waistcoat!

De W. I'll lend you one!

Euph. Theophilus, you're too precipitate—we'll fix the date after dinner.

De W. Very well. (*turning to* Nancy) Nancy, we'll dine early!

Nancy. Very good, sir! (*approaching* De Walker) I hope it's all right about that 'ere sovereign, sir?

De W. Sovereign! I promised you a sovereign if you succeeded. (*emphatically*) You shall have five pounds for failing!

Nancy. Five pounds! I must be a dreaming! (*walks up.*)

De W. (*exultingly*). Round the corner, how delightful! However, it's lucky it has turned out as it has, for I clearly see (*to audience*) that when a certain young man has made up his mind to marry a certain young woman, and that certain young woman has also made up her mind to have that certain young man, whoever attempts to thwart them will find that they are——

Isabel. and Mr. B. } (*taking* De Walker *by the arm*). One too many for him!

CURTAIN.

SYNOPSIS.

In a pleasant parlor in a country house, NANCY, a pert housemaid, engaged in brushing a coat, lightens her arduous labor by commenting upon her master, Mr. THEOPHILUS DE WALKER'S, peculiarities, and is interrupted by that gentleman's entrance. He asks, in a peevish manner, what the new arrival, Mr. BROMPTON, is like. NANCY tells him she doesn't know, and leaves the room. Mr. DE WALKER launches out into a fierce invective against the young fellows who come courting his darling daughter, ISABELLA, and proceeds, in a humorous soliloquy, to tell his daughter's history from her babyhood up; and expressing his firm determination not to part with her to the youth who has arrived at his house. ISABELLA enters, and expresses her delight that Mr. BROMPTON has come, "for he is such a nice young man." While they are conversing, Miss EUPHEMIA, DE WALKER'S sister, enters; she is got up in juvenile style, and speaks in a romantic manner. She tells DE WALKER that BROMPTON is her choice for ISABELLA, and as she has a fortune to leave, she will have her say in the matter. When BROMPTON comes on, he alarms DE WALKER by his suave and dashing style, and greatly pleases the ladies. The old gentleman contrives to prevent the young one having a chance to be alone with ISABELLA, and they all leave him to himself. He is on the verge of taking a pinch of snuff as DE WALKER returns. ISABELLA hates snuff-taking, and her father tries to get proof that BROMPTON "snuffs," but is "headed off" every time, and likewise fails to catch him with the weed. This whole scene is alarmingly funny. The old gentleman goes off, completely "bluffed," when BROMPTON is about to take a pinch as ISABELLA enters; he conceals his snuff, and soon makes himself so agreable to ISABELLA, that he is about to propose, having seized her hand with that intention. The father enters, and orders him to leave the house. BROMPTON prepares to obey. But EUPHEMIA intervenes, and says if he goes that she will accompany him. DE WALKER gives a reluctant consent to the match, but determines to prevent it, and for this purpose gives NANCY a sovereign, conditionally that she gets BROMPTON to kiss her. But the young lover fails to fall into this snare; in fact, he comes out of the furnace like fine gold. At last DE WALKER concocts and tells EUPHEMIA a story to the effect that BROMPTON is his own son—hence his reason for preventing the marriage, and the lady tells BROMPTON "it can never be." The youth enraged at this trifling, collars DE WALKER, as EUPHEMIA screeches out, "Would you strike your *father?*" An amusing scene ensues, and ISABELLA and NANCY entering, DE WALKER admits that BROMPTON is 'One too Many for Him," and consents to the union of the young couple.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means Right of Stage, facing the Aduience; L. Left; C. Centre; R. C. Right of Centre; L. C. Left of Centre. D F. Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. Centre Door in the Flat; R. D. F. Right Door in the Flat; L. D. F. Left Door in the Flat; R. D. Right Door; L. D. Left Door; 1 E. First Entrance; 2 E. Second Entrance; U. E. Upper Entrance; 1, 2 or 3 G. First, Second or Third Grooves.

R. R. C. C. L. C. L.

☞ The reader is supposed to be upon the stage, facing the audience.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Royal Olympic Theatre,
London, Feb. 10th, 1868.

Mr. Theophilus De Walker, a "too fond parent,".....Mr. CHARLES MATHEWS.
Mr. Cymon Brompton, an "impetuous" bachelor.....Mr. ASHLEY.
Miss Euphemia De Walker, a romantically inclined spinster.....Mrs. CAULFIELD.
Isabella, a young lady with "no objection to get married,".Miss SCHAVEY.
Nancy, a housemaid with an "independent spirit,".....Miss E. FARREN.

TIME—THE PRESENT DAY.

TIME OF PERFORMANCE—FIFTY MINUTES.

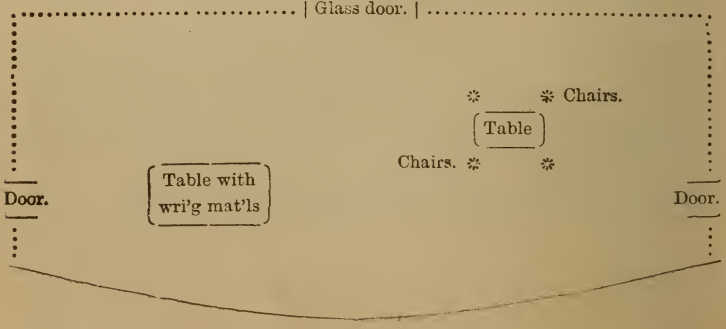
COSTUMES.

DE WALKER.—Frock coat, double-brested waistcoat, dark pants, greyish wig, black moustache (distingue make-up.)
BROMPTON.—Fashionable morning costume
EUPHEMIA.—Affected and "would-be juvenile" make-up, silk dress, &c., &c.
ISABELLA.—White muslin dress, &c., &c.
NANCY.—Smart maid-servant's make-up.

PROPERTIES.—Writing materials, two snuff-boxes, box of lozenges, carpet-bag.

SCENERY.

SCENE.—A comfortably furnished parlor in a country house.—At back, glass-door (with windows extending half way down), through which a conservatory is seen.



THE THESPIAN SPEAKER.

A WORDY COMBAT.

From Charles Dance's Comedietta of "A Morning Call."

CHARACTERS.

SIR EDWARD ARDENT, *a Country Gentleman.*
MRS. CHILLINGTONE, *a Young Widow.*

Time and Place—England at the present day.

SCENE.—*A well-furnished Drawing-room with two doors; a fire-place; a work-table near the fire with a bell and all materials for work; a coal scuttle with coals near the entrance door.*

[This is a very sprightly scene from an excellent petite comedy. Mrs. Chillingtone is seated in her drawing-room at her work-table, on which she has deposited her work, to peruse an epistle, just received from a female friend stopping with a gay party at a neighbor's house, congregated to enjoy the Christmas festivities. The communication warns her that a heavy wager had been laid among a party of gentlemen that Sir Edward Ardent, "a fascinating fellow," would woo and win the widow within a week, notwithstanding her resolution never to marry again.]

MRS. CHILLINGTONE. So, my gentleman, I am to surrender in less than a week, am I? the fortress must be badly defended indeed, that can't hold out for that time It isn't worth thinking of, and I don't care a pin about it; but the man's impudence is almost provoking, and little as it signifies, I declare I can hardly help wishing that this renowned general would commence his attack, that I may silence his batteries and send him about his business. (*shivering*) Ugh! how cold it is, a little bit of a skirmish might warm one, for positively the fire won't. (*rings the bell, and pokes the fire.*

Enter SIR EDWARD ARDENT.

SIR EDWARD (*aside*). The snow puts an extinguisher on our

hunting to-day, and some amusement I must have, so I have come to try if I can win the widow, *and* my bet. (*she rings a second time*) She rings again—what does she want, I wonder?

MRS. C. Coals.

SIR E. Ma'am?

MRS. C. Coals.

SIR E. Coals?

MRS. C. (*looking up*). Dear me, Sir Edward Ardent, I declare, I beg your pardon, I took you for my servant.

SIR E. Would that you would *keep* me for your servant!

MRS. C. What wages do you ask?

SIR E. I'll serve you for love.

MRS. C. You'll never get paid.

SIR E. Engage me, and I'll take my chance.

MRS. C. You have great confidence.

SIR E. Not too much.

MRS. C. Yes, you have—in *yourself*, I mean.

SIR E. Never mind, engage me?

MRS. C. I've heard a bad character of you from your last place.

SIR E. Indeed! from whom?

MRS C. From your mistress, to be sure.

SIR E. What mistress?

MRS. C. Have you so many?

SIR E. None! but I seek one, and *that* one——

MRS. C. Will have a remarkably troublesome servant.

SIR E. Well, if I am not to finish a sentence——

MRS. C. My very good friend, when you are talking with a lady, think yourself remarkably well off if you are allowed to *begin* a sentence.

SIR E. I am quite aware that ladies——

MRS. C. Are very unreasonable on that subject—generally speaking, they are—I am an exception. You wish to say something?

SIR E. I do—something very——

MRS. C. Stop a minute—you shall have every chance—sit down and warm yourself, while I work. (*he sits*) When you feel inclined to speak—speak, and I won't interrupt you.

SIR E. (*rises*). I cannot sit—I am too agitated. (*paces the stage.*)

MRS C. Well, whatever you do, don't walk about, for that is unbearable.

SIR. E. I don't know what to do.

MRS. C. Poor man! then I'll tell you—fetch the scuttle and put on some coals.

SIR E. Hadn't I better ring for your servant?

MRS. C. Certainly not! when I rung for him you answered the bell, and not only that, but you applied for the place.

SIR E. He is shaking the snow off my coat.

MRS. C. An additional reason for your doing his work, and so

let me see how well you can do it. (*he fetches the scuttle, which he carries with both hands*) Very well, very well—upon my word I think you have been in service before; there, don't spill them, or I shall have to send you about your business.

SIR E (*stopping*). Mrs. Chillingtone, listen to me, I am serious—

MRS. C. Not with the coal-scuttle in your hand surely.

SIR E. It is very hard that you will turn every thing I say into ridicule; however, in the hope that artificial warmth may thaw the natural iciness of your disposition, I will make up the fire before I unburthen my mind.

MRS. C. Stop! I have had hundreds of serious speeches made to me, but it just occurs to me that I never heard one from a man with a scuttle full of coals. Speak just as you are, scuttle and all.

SIR E. No! indeed, I shall not.

MRS. C. Now, do, pray; you can't think how well you look.

SIR E. You must excuse me. I certainly cannot see why a man who feels earnestly should not express himself earnestly at any moment; neither do I see that the ebullition of a genuine feeling is rendered less worthy of attention by the accidental circumstance of his having a coal-scuttle in his hand; but (*throwing some coals on*) you have chosen to point attention to the fact, and possibly (*throwing more*) there *may* be some degree of ridicule attached to it. Therefore, although I burn to speak, (*he looks at her, she is looking another way*) I say, Mrs. Chillingtone, although I burn to speak—(*throwing all that remains on.*)

MRS. C. Don't smother the fire on any account.

SIR. E. (*putting down the scuttle, and pacing the stage—aside*). Her cool indifference is past belief. I m not used to being treated in such a way by a woman, and yet there *are* moments when I fancy that she is listening more than she pretends to be.

MRS. C. Are you speaking to me, Sir Edward? because I don't hear one word you say.

SIR E. I was talking to myself.

MRS. C. And there is no better way of ensuring an attentive listener.

SIR E Thank you, madam.

MRS. C. (*rising and coming forward*). You and I have known one another a long time; why say "Madam?" It sounds very formal.

SIR E Does it, does it? (*aside*). She thaws—by Jupiter, she thaws! (*aloud, and earnestly*). Does it?

MRS C. Does it, does it, does it? Why, yes, it does—and what then?

SIR E. (*aside*). Down to the freezing point again. I'll pretend to go, and try what that will do.

MRS. C. I haven't had the speech yet; when are you going to begin?

Sir E Some other time; I think I hear a carriage. (*going.*)

Mrs. C. I hear none, but if any body should call, I can say "not at home."

Sir E. (*aside*). Oh, ho, my lady! (*returning*) Well, since you will say "not at home"——

Mrs. C. I didn't say I *would*—I only said I *could.*

Sir E. Mrs. Chillingtone. good morning. (*going.*)

Mrs. C. Nonsense? stay where you are, you restless man.

Sir E. You're very kind, but I must go. (*goes to door, which he opens and holds in hand, standing half-in and half-out.*)

Mrs. C. Where to?

Sir E. I don't know; but good-bye.

Mrs. C. Till when, then?

Sir E. (*aside*). She says "till when?" It's my private opinion she wishes me to stay.

Mrs. C. Till when!

Sir E. Till to-morrow. (*aside*) One day's absence will bring her to her senses. (*going.*)

Mrs. C. Not to-morrow, you cruel man.

Sir E. (*shutting door and returning*). Ah! you wish me not to go to-day.

Mrs. C. I don't wish you not to go to-day—I only wish you not to come to-morrow.

Sir E. Shall you be out?

Mrs. C No, I shall be at home; but I shan't want you.

Sir E. (*aside*). It's nothing to me; but as sure as fate, there's a man in the case—its nothing to me, I say, but I don't like it. (*aloud*) "You shan't *want* me," Mrs. Chillingtone—"you shan't want me?" that is, don't misunderstand me, I don't mean to say it's likely you would want me, but when you say you don't want me, it seems as much as to say you don't wish for me; of course, I don't mean to say it's likely you would wish for me, but when you say, or *if* you say, you don't wish for me, it's *almost* as much as to say that you wish me away; I say *almost*, I don't say *quite.*

Mrs. C. But I do; you have been a long time arriving at a conclusion, but the curious part of the business is that you have arrived at the right one.

Sir E. After such a declaration, it would be folly in me to say another word.

Mrs. C. A declaration? good gracious! Who has made a declaration? I heard none.

Sir E. This is trifling; I say it would be folly in me to say another word.

Mrs C. So it would, so it would; but you'll say it for all that.

Sir E. Well, I believe I shall, in fact, I must; I have a question to ask you—a question, my dear Mrs. Chillingtone, to which I must entreat your most serious attention. (*she walks gently off to her own room*) I will not add to your embarrassment by even looking at you

while you answer it, contenting myself with merely begging that your answer may be a candid one. (*listens*) Yes, cost what it may, a candid one. (*listens again*) I pause for your assurance that it shall be a candid one. (*aside*) She hesitates—she's lost.

MRS. C. (*calling from within*). Are you gone, Sir Edward?

SIR E. Gone, Mrs. Chillingtone? gone? Why, *you* are gone.

MRS. C. (*re-entering*). Only for a moment I went for my thimble.

SIR E. Went for your thimble! (*aside*) Women have always an excuse at the tips of their fingers. (*aloud*) Only for a moment! Don't you know what Mrs. Haller says? "There are moments in which we live years"

MRS. C. I must beg, Sir Edward, that you won't quote Mrs. Haller to me. I never associate with ladies of that description.

SIR E. (*aside*). This is put on—she must be shamming, for she couldn't know that I was—how deceitful women are! but I *will* go now. (*going to door*) I positively will go. (*opens door, then stops—aloud*) Surely you heard my question.

MRS. C. Well, I fancied I heard you mumbling something.

SIR E. Mumbling! (*aside*) Well, well, I'll bear it all—my turn *must* come. (*aloud*) I asked you why you wished me away?

MRS. C. What! to-morrow?

SIR E. Yes.

MRS. C. Oh! because I expect somebody else.

SIR E. A man?

MRS. C. Ah, that's the worst of it!

SIR E. A husband, perhaps?

MRS. C. No, a simple man.

SIR. E. The more simple, the more likely to become a husband.

MRS. C. That is the most natural thing you have said yet.

SIR E. Why so?

MRS. C. It's so rude.

SIR E. I didn't mean to be rude; make allowance for my feelings—I *feared* it was a husband.

MRS. C. You need not have feared it. When you asked if it was a man that I expected, I said "that's the worst of it." I could not have said that, if it had been a husband.

SIR E. *Now*, who is rude? but I care nothing for rudeness—I derive warmth and comfort from the openness of that assurance.

MRS. C. (*imating his tone*). And I derive neither warmth nor comfort from the openness of that door! so I wish you would shut it.

SIR E. Oh, Mrs. Chillingtone, you are *too* cold.

MRS. C. I told you so.

SIR E. (*going towards door*). Be content; I am about to shut it once and forever.

MRS. C. And when you have shut it, on which side of it do you propose to remain?

SIR E. Has the lovely Mrs. Chillingtone a choice on the subject?

MRS. C. The lovely Mrs. Chillingtone has *no* choice upon the

subject—but the lovely Mrs. Chillingtone, like the rest of her too fascinating sex, has considerable curiosity.

Sir E. Your wish shall be gratified—I remain on this side. (*comes in, having shut the door.*)

Mrs. C. I excuse the impertinence of that speech for the sake of its amusing vanity.

Sir E. (*aside*). I'll let her go on—I'll let her go on—there *will* come a day of reckoning.

Mrs. C. Well, sir?

Sir E. Well, ma'am!

Mrs. C. Oh, nonsense! you mustn't repeat my words—you must say something; suppose this were a play, you couldn't come into a room where a lady was, shut the door, and not speak.

Sir E. Perhaps you will be good enough to furnish the plot of the play.

Mrs. C. I fancy it would be more in my way to act it; however, I'll try my hand. I must begin, I believe, with the stage directions.

Sir E. If you please.

Mrs. C. Well—"The stage represents a drawing-room in Mrs. Chillingtone's country house—a large party are assembled at another country house, a few miles off."

Sir E. What, on the stage?

Mrs. C. No, no! that is only for *your* information, to help you what to say; now, don't interrupt me, and don't speak till I tell you. "Mrs. C. has been strongly pressed to join the party at her neighbor's house; but, knowing herself to be rather an attractive person, and knowing that men, always more or less silly about women, think it behooves them to make especial donkeys of themselves when on a visit to a country house, she has declined. One of the gentlemen——"

Sir E. Donkeys!

Mrs. C. "Sir Edward Ardent, by name"—(I told you not to interrupt me, and you see what you have got by it)—"thinks proper to ride over to Mrs. Chillingtone's under pretence of a 'morning call,' although it is very evident to her that he has some object lurking behind."

Sir E How does she know that?

Mrs. C. I'm writing a play, and I'm not bound to tell more than I like.

Sir E. But I have to speak presently, and I want information.

Mrs C. You shall have more than you want. "Sir Edward, like hundreds of other moderately good-looking men, has been humored by sundry weak women until he fancies himself irresistible."

Sir E. (*aside*). He may prove so yet.

Mrs. C. "And, taking advantage of a previous acquaintance with Mrs. C. to deprive her of her privilege of saying 'not at

home,' he breaks through the ordinary rules of society—enters —her room without being announced—and "——

Sir E. Stay! I can explain all.

Mrs. C. Can you? that is just what I want; but don't be in a hurry—pull that couch this way. (*he pulls a couch to the centre of the stage*) "Mrs. Chillingtone, though astonished at his coolness, takes her seat on one side of the couch (*she sits*) and motions Sir Edward to occupy the other." (*he prepares to do so—when he is nearly seated*, Mrs. C. *puts her hand under his arm and causes him to rise again*) "He has *almost* done so when he suddenly recollects that he has omitted to bow on accepting the invitation." (*he bows to her*) "Having supplied the omission, he takes his seat, and Mrs. Chillingtone waits patiently for the promised explanation of his extraordinary conduct."

Sir E. I can give it in five words.

Mrs. C. Not less?

Sir E. Yes, in three— "I love you!"

Mrs. C. Stay a minute—let me clearly understand. Are you carrying on the little drama I began, or are you Sir Edward Ardent, *Bart.*, in your own proper person, addressing yourself to me —Fanny Chillingtone, widow?

Sir E. I hope you don't take me for an actor.

Mrs. C. Well, in love affairs, there is not much difference between a man on and a man off the stage—one is a professional actor, and the other an actor of professions.

Sir E You think, then, that the truth has no part in love affairs

Mrs C. Oh, yes it has, I wish it hadn't.

Sir E. Why so?

Mrs. C. Because it always comes too late.

Sir E. Always?

Mrs C. I speak from my own experience.

Sir E. You have never tried but once.

Mrs. C And have no inclination to try again.

Sir E. You think all men alike, then?

Mrs. C. Yes, in their disposition to deceive women.

Sir E. May there not be *one* exception?

Mrs. C. There may; but it must be a golden one

Sir E Come, I have gained a step at last—you admit there may be one exception—I trust before the week is out to prove myself that one

Mrs C. A week? that is a very short time.

Sir E. If I fail to convince you of my sincerity in a week——

Mrs C. You'll own yourself beaten—and pay——

Sir E. (*rising*). Mrs. Chillingtone!

Mrs. C. Sit down, Sir Edward—and pay your court to some one else.

Sir E. (*aside*). What a fool I am, I had nearly betrayed myself! (*aloud*) Where failure would be death, I will think of nothing but success.

MRS. C. What a charming speech! many men have offered to live for me, and I have refused them—you propose to die for me—now if I thought I could depend upon you——

SIR E. (*aside*). Confound your impudence! but I'll be even with you yet. (*aloud*) You may—indeed, you may.

MRS. C. As you have allowed yourself so short a time for your conquest—hadn't you better begin?

SIR E. If you please. I confess, and, indeed, I think you must feel, that I start under some disadvantage. I have proclaimed that I love you—I have played out, as it were, my thirteenth trump, and am now dependent upon you to bring in my strong suit.

MRS. C. Your position is even more awkward than you think—if I play your cards as well as my own, you must be "dumby."

SIR E. Play them on *any* terms, I am content—it makes us partners.

MRS. C. Was ever knave more civil to a queen? But look you, Sir Knave, a husband who must not open his mouth——

SIR E. Can never contradict his wife.

MRS. C. True! but a wife who is compelled to talk for two——

SIR E. Is confirmed, without a struggle, in her sex's dearest privilege.

MRS. C. (*aside*). I could almost like him for his impertinence.

SIR E. (*after a pause*). I'd give the world to know your thoughts.

MRS. C. You shall know them for nothing; I was thinking which I should prefer—a deaf husband or a dumb one.

SIR E If you allude to me——

MRS. But I do not.

SIR E. I only said "if." If you allude to me, I will be dumb, *not* deaf.

MRS. C. Why not deaf?

SIR E. I could not bear to *see* you speak, and thirst to hear the liquid music of your voice.

MRS. C. It's very kind of you to think me so charming, and I dare say you're quite right; but if you were dumb you couldn't tell me so.

SIR E. What matter? I could find other means to make you know it—I could lie at your feet the live-long day, like a pet dog, with happy eyes to see you, with greedy ears to hear you, and express, by mute devotion, that deep affection which, at last, no tongue, however eloquent, could tell.

MRS C. (*aside*). Hang the fellow! how pleasant he talks!

SIR E. (*aside*). She's touched.

MRS. C. There is only one thing I fear, Sir Edward.

SIR E. (*earnestly*). Say what it is? It ceases with the utterance.

MRS. C. If you were to become my pet dog——

SIR E. Yes?

MRS. C. I'm afraid you would expect me to wash and comb you every day. (*laughs at him, rises, and walks about.*)

SIR E. (*rising, and paces the stage*). Really, Mrs. Chillingtone—this indifference—I wish you wouldn't laugh—this indifference—now, pray don't laugh—this indifference to one who—oh, well, if you are determined to laugh, it's useless to attempt opening one's mouth.

MRS. C. There, there, I won't laugh any more. (*sits down*) I am dumb and will only express by mute devotion, that (what is it? oh!) that deep affection which no tongue, however eloquent, can tell.

SIR E. I should be sorry, Mrs. Chillingtone, to charge you with affectation, but this indifference is unnatural, it is unworthy of your sex, and, allow me to add, *unlike* your sex. (*aside*) I'll try if I can make her jealous; (*aloud*) for I don't hesitate to tell you that it has been my fate to make an impression upon the fairer portion of the creation, which, in point of numbers, I believe to be quite unusal; it is not one, two, ten, or twenty only, that I might have married, had I but held my little finger up. I haven't a particle of vanity in my composition; but common sense tells me there must be something about me to account for the very marked preference shown me by the ladies.

MRS. C. Don't mistake me! I always listen with pleasure when my own praises are sounded, though I seldom take the trouble to inquire to what regiment the trumpeter belongs; you may go on.

SIR E. It is now some three years since first I met you; on that occasion it was my good fortune to dance with you—shall I ever forget that dance? no! to my dying day the very tune will haunt me—it was a polka!

MRS. C. No such thing; it was a quadrille.

SIR E. You're right, it was. I said it but to try you.

MRS. C. (*aside*). I wish I had held my tongue.

SIR E. (*aside*). I didn't remember a bit about it; but that's nothing. (*aloud*) You are quite aware that I never even hinted to you the passion with which you then inspired me.

MRS. C. (*aside*). Now, *is* he going to have the effrontery to pretend that he has been in love with me all this time?

SIR E. No, like the gentle Viola, I "let concealment feed on my damask cheek."

MRS. C. While you yourself fed, I suppose, on your damask table-cloth.

SIR E. Is this a moment for levity? I ask you, *is* this a moment for levity? but I am rightly served—women have adored me by dozens, and I have sported with their feelings, I have slighted them, poor dears! but, at length, to avenge their sufferings, you step forward as their appointed champion, and I, in turn, am doomed to the bitter pangs of unrequited affection. Oh, Mrs. Chillingtone, may you be saved from such a fate! You have many

admirers (not so many, I dare say, as I have, but a great many)—you snub them all, but beware! the time and the man may come, and you may meet in our sex, the avenger I have found in yours.

MRS. C. There's no great danger.

SIR E. I don't know that; love delights in tormenting—women are weak creatures, men are full of deceit.

MRS. C. You must be going to publish a copy-book.

SIR E. Extremes frequently meet; she who begins by hating, often ends by loving; some day you may be addressed by one whom, like myself, for instance, at first sight—he may be very good-looking, although you may think him plain—his figure may be nearly faultless, and you see nothing in it—his conversation, winning to all other ears, may fall unheeded upon yours—nay, even his voice, to many soft and sweet, may sound to you harsh and discordant. And yet this man shall bend your stubborn spirit—and how? I grieve to say by flattery; he shall tell you you've a pretty foot.

MRS. C. Oh, Sir Edward!

SIR E. And praise, as indeed he may with truth, your dancing; he shall talk of the beauty of your figure——

MRS. C. Oh, Sir Edward!

SIR E. And compare it, to its advantage, with the classic forms of old; he shall discourse of your brilliant wit——

MRS. C. Oh, Sir Edward! you'll prevent me from speaking at all.

SIR E. And, having thus fixed your attention, and secured your silence, he shall tell you that your voice is "linked sweetness, long drawn out," that your face (MRS. CHILLINGTONE *leans back, and throws a white handkerchief over her head*)—but here description fails me—not because, as a proof of your unequalled modesty, you have concealed it—but because language offers not the means to do it justice. He no doubt will feel the same difficulty, and passing to your hand, which perhaps he may perceive, as I do now, for once without a glove, he shall, transported by his feelings, venture to take it within his, and finding no resistance, even to press it to his lips—then will you be convinced of the depth of his devotion, then, on a sudden, will the change take place—then will his figure in an instant become good, his face handsome, his conversation brilliant, and his voice musical—then: but possibly I offend you—I will release your hand (*he lets it go, it falls by her side*) How is this? Is she ill? No; slightly overcome—it's only another victory, gained a little sooner than I expected. Edward Ardent, what the devil *is* there in you, that no woman on earth can resist you? I *must* look at her. (*pulls the handkerchief from her face*) Fast asleep, by all that's horrible! (*walks up and down, much excited*) It's enough to drive one mad—downright, stark, staring, raving mad—but she wakes.

MRS. C. (*who has only pretended to be asleep, pretending to awake*).

What's o'clock? Oh, what a dreadful noise you make. I was having such a nice nap.

SIR E. And charming dreams, no doubt?

MRS. C. Yes, till just this minute. I dreamt that a nice gentlemany man was saying all sorts of captivating things to me.

SIR E. (*aside*). Indeed! (*aloud*) You *do* care about the creatures then?

MRS. C. Not a bit; but you know how absurd dreams are.

SIR E. Very likely. 'A nice gentlemany man was saying all sorts of captivating things to you."

MRS. C. When suddenly he turned into a monkey, and grinned and chattered most repulsively. At length the monster darted at my hand; I fancied he was going to bite it, and——I suppose that awoke me.

SIR E. Others can awake from from dreams as well as you. Madam, good morning. (*going*)

MRS. C. Where is the man going to?

SIR E. "The man!" the monster, you mean.

MRS. C. Well, the monster.

SIR E. To the Zoological gardens. [*Exit.*

MRS. C. He is actually gone; and some women would say "I have lost him forever." I knowing a little more of the world—allow him five minutes, at the outside, to return.

VICE AGAINST VIRTUE.

From Buckstone's Drama of "The Wreck Ashore."

CHARACTERS.

JEMMY STARLING, *a Farm Laborer.*
MILES BERTRAM, *a Young Squire.*
WALTER BARNARD, *a Young Farmer.*

TIME—*A hundred years ago.*

SCENE.—*A rural landscape.*

[This is a very sensational and effective scene, which should be repeatedly rehearsed, in order that no accident occurs to mar its effect. A gun and an axe, which can be made of wood, are necessary in its representation, the axe to be lying in a corner of the stage. Miles, a villain, has made a proposal of marriage to Alice, who is the betrothed of Walter, and hence their feud.]

JEMMY STARLING *is standing on the stage when a gun is fired off outside.*

JEMMY (*startled*). Bless my heart! what a condition my nerves must be in, when a gun makes me jump so! I must speak to Dr.

Bone upon the subject. (*looks out*) Oh! it's young Squire Bertram, electrifying the hares and partridges. I wonder if he's got over the cut o' the head Miss Alice gave him with a spead when he wanted to be owdacious to her; however, he must take care o' my young Master Walter, because I have raisons to suspect that he is her true lovier; and when one *is* once a true lovier, one is 'clined to be fightish, and show violent simpletons.

Enter MILES, *re-loading his gun.*

MILES. Ah, my little Starling! all up and busy on the farm, eh? and Alice the foremost amongst you, I warrant.

JEM. I have not seed her as yet, sir. Pray, sir, if I may be so bold as to ask, how you got the hurt on your head so soon well? I suppose as you be so conveylissom, Dr. Bone gave you an inscription to put on it.

MILES The doctor was certainly skillful.

JEM. Oh, that 'ere Dr. Bone! he's a man of immense talons.

MILES. I must be cautious that I do not meet with such another tumble——

JEM. Tumble, eh? He, he, he! Pray don't think me imperent or consuming, but take a young chap's counsel as have seed a good deal of this world and its infernal organs, as Dr. Bone says; when a pretty girl ben't willing to be kissed like, never go too far when she's a spead close at hand. (*crosses*) He, he, he! You understand, "that's advice gratis," as Dr. Bone says. [*Exit.*

MILES. All the boobies on the farm seem to know of the repulse I met with from Alice. What an idiot I am to think of a girl that I am convinced has no love for me! Well, well, I'll see her for the last time, and if she still has a smile for Walter Barnard and a frown for Miles Bertram, a trip to London, or a cruise with Captain Grampus will be of infinite service to the despised lover. I think I hear her voice. Alice! are you there?

WALTER BARNARD *appears.*

WALTER. Who asks for Alice?

MILES. Walter! how now, my lad, you look sulkily.

WAL. It is time to look so, when neither good words nor harsh deeds will keep a man from a pursuit wherein he is not wanted, and can never obtain his object.

MILES. It is, then, as I suspected; my successful rival stands before me. Hark ye, Walter, you have ever been my rock ahead; even my superior; at our school, in the race, in the sports of the field; and even now, when I would contend with you for the heart of a silly girl, still am I followed by the same ill luck. 'Sdeath! I should like to try a desperate struggle with you, before I quite leave you to your laurels; not that I care so much for the girl;

but to be ever thrust aside, in this fashion, wounds my pride; will you try a fall with me? or snap a pistol at ten or twelve paces?

WAL. I will do neither, Miles Bertram; all I ask of you is, to discontinue your notice of Alice; shake hands with me, and turn your thoughts elsewhere.

MILES (*putting his gun near the axe*). Just one struggle; here, upon this spot Now, Walter, foot to foot, and arm to arm.

WAL. No, no, be gone; we shall have the people of the farm observe us.

MILES You shall, by Heaven, you shall, (*seizing him*) or I'll dash my fist in your face, and brand you as a coward.

WAL. Take your hands from me. You will not?

They struggle; WALTER *throws him over;* MILES *regains his feet, seizes the axe, and is rushing on* WALTER, *when* STARLING *runs in, takes up* BERTRAM'S *gun, and presents it at him.*

JEM. Drop the axe, or I'll perpetrate you with duck-shot.

WAL. Go to your work, sir.

JEM. Not till he drops the axe; or I'll make a suicide of him, and send him again to Dr. Bone.

WAL Give it me. (*takes the gun from* JEMMY, *and offers it*) There's your gun, Miles, take it, and own yourself fairly beaten!

MILES. Beaten!

WAL. Hush! here's the girl; take the gun and don't let her be a witness to our squabbling. (MILES *takes the gun, crosses, and goes off, darting a look of fury at* WALTER.)

ROYAL TALK TO A KING.

From Charles Dance's Comedy of the "Victor Vanquished."

CHARACTERS.

CHARLES XII., *King of Sweden.*
BARON DE GORTZ, *Royal Secretary.*
IKLA, *a Tartar Princess.*

SCENE.—*A Gothic chamber in the house of the Baron. A door at the back and one on each side. Table covered with papers, etc., chairs, etc, of oak. A portrait of Louis XIV. on the wall.*

[After the battle of Pultrowa, Charles XII. returned to rule Sweden in a most despotic manner—punishing the smallest crimes with death. To palliate his pride for the loss of the disastrous fight, terminating an ambitious career, apologists of Charles circulated a rumor that it was occasioned through neglect of orders given to Gustavus Reinold, captain of Hulans, who was, in

consequence, condemned to death, yet escaped the penalty. Charles, having seen Ikla, a Tartar princess, a niece of the Baron de Gortz, his secretary, visits her under the title of the Count d'Olfen, beneath which designation he is known in the following scene, in the hope of winning her affections, as her uncle, the Baron, dreams that the summit of his ambition can be gained through becoming the uncle, by marriage, to the King. He has been engaged in composing a memoir of the life of Charles XII., and in it introduces a chapter giving "some account of his marriage by the Baron de Gortz, uncle of his majesty," an imaginative vision of the nuptials he seeks to bring about. Charles, in perusing the manuscripts laying upon the baron's table, has taken this title page which the baron desired to suppress until the marriage actually occurred. This is the paper to which the monarch alludes.]

Baron de Gortz. That girl gets the better of everybody; but I begin to be afraid she'll make a *mess* of this *glorious marriage*. (*door opens*) And here comes the awful individual I fondly hoped to call my nephew.

Enter Charles XII., *papers in his hand.*

Charles (*giving papers*). Baron de Gortz, communicate these orders to whom they concern, for everything is to be in readiness for my departure within two hours. I shall open the campaign to-morrow. (*crosses.*)

Bar. To-morrow, sire? War is not yet declared.

Charles. Then, sir, we'll declare it as we go along.

Bar. What route will your majesty please to take?

Charles Berlin.

Bar Might I venture to ask what or who has induced your majesty to take this sudden determination?

Charles. You! I have been reading your book, and you have opened my eyes.

Bar. (*aside*). I'd better have shut my own for good. (*aloud*) I assure your majesty, I had no such intention.

Charles. I dare say not, Baron. Men who are not quite so clever as they think themselves, and who yet will write a book, oftentimes produce effects the exact contrary of those they contemplated. I have been fooling away my time for the last fortnight with a woman, and forgetting the higher destinies to which I was born. (*down*)

Bar. (*looking round—aside*). I wish she'd come; he'd soon forget his destinies again.

Charles. Make my excuses to your charming niece, and tell her——

Enter Ikla, *in rich Tartar costume.*

Bar Your pardon, sire; she comes to receive your adieus in person.

Charles (*aside*). Confound it! (*crosses*) I was in hopes to avoid seeing her again. (*turning from her and going up.*)

IKLA. Your servant, Count.

CHARLES (*without looking at her*). Madam, your most obedient.

IKLA. Is that the way you receive me?

CHARLES. Why, the fact is—(*gradually looking around at her—aside*) Plague take the creature! How pretty she looks! (*advances*) I really must—no, no, I'd better not.

IKLA. Well, Count, as my presence seems to embarrass you, I beg to apologize for the intrusion, and depart. (*going up.*)

CHARLES. Stay!

IKLA. Indeed, I shall do no such thing. (*going.*)

CHARLES. Stay, I command you!

IKLA (*turning*). Dear me!—command, indeed! Perhaps you fancy yourself the King?

RAR. (*aside to* IKLA). Never you mind—stay!

CHARLES. Perhaps I did, and perhaps I was wrong. No one can be said to be King when a superior power is present. At all events, I beg your pardon.

IKLA. O, don't say another word about it! I know very well I'm hasty and thoughtless enough myself.

BAR. (*aside to* CHARLES). Your majesty will graciously make allowance for her Tartar education.

CHARLES. (*aside to him*). Leave us! (*aloud*) Baron, give me those papers again. (BARON *is about to do so, but, on a sign from the* KING, *he goes up, and places them on table in portfolio.*)

BAR. (*aside*). Women for ever! I never knew a proclamation of peace follow so quickly on a declaration of war. [*Exit.*

The COUNT *and* IKLA *look at each other—they seem to hesitate as to which is to speak first. After a little, they advance; both seem about to speak, but hesitate again, and return to their former positions.*

CHARLES (*aside*). Would any one believe that I am Charles the Twelfth? I begin to doubt it myself. Nations tremble at my name, yet I—I won't say tremble—but feel very much like a fool in the presence of a simple girl!

IKLA (*aside*). My plan is almost too bold—but love prompts it; justice supports it, and success will crown it.

CHARLES (*aside*). Come, come, this won't do. Though *she* don't know who I am, I must remember that I do! (*advances towards her.*)

IKLA (*aside*). He approaches—he seeks a Tartar—he shall find one!

CHARLES. Well, are you getting more reconciled to the habits of a civilized country?

IKLA. I beg your pardon,—is Sweden what you call a civilized country?

CHARLES (*aside*). She's beginning with her usual impertinence. (*aloud*) Certainly—most certainly!

IKLA. Well, don't be angry—I only asked for information.

CHARLES. Have you any reason to doubt it?

IKLA. None whatever—only all things go by comparison.

CHARLES. Why, you don't mean to compare your country with mine, surely?

IKLA. O, dear, no—for two reasons.

CHARLES. Which are——

IKLA. The one that I think the argument would become too personal; the other, that I am quite sure you would get the worst of it.

CHARLES (*aside*). If this be honesty (and I think it is), it's a pity that kings don't meet with it more frequently. (*aloud*) Come, then, let us have your opinion of Sweden, as compared with some other country.

IKLA. The opinion of a barbarian, like me, is *not* worth much upon such subjects; but, as you ask it, *I* think there is, at this moment, but one truly civilized country on the face of the earth.

CHARLES. And that is——

IKLA. France.

CHARLES. Have you ever been there?

IKLA. Never; I judge from books and pictures.

CHARLES. A pretty way of judging!

IKLA. Not a bad one, Count, when you can't see the originals. How do you judge of the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the Greeks, the Romans?

CHARLES. Never mind—go on with what you were saying.

IKLA. Well, look at that picture: it's a portrait of Louis the Fourteenth.

CHARLES. I see it is—and what of that?

IKLA. If I were ever so unfortunate as to fall in love with a king, it would be with him.

CHARLES. For his fine clothes, I suppose?

IKLA. Not at all. If dress were the only attraction, I might as well fall in love with any trumpery count about his person.

CHARLES. Trumpery!

IKLA. A careless word, Count, used merely by way of comparison. Surely you will admit that a count sinks to nothing when compared to a king?

CHARLES. Certainly—certainly!

IKLA. Now, Louis the Fourteenth expects from an his courtiers the same attention to magnificence of costume which he exhibits in his own person; and, in my humble opinion, he is quite right. A good king is the last to think more of himself for the pomp which surrounds him; while his subjects would be the first to think less of him if he neglected to mantain it: both see the necessity, and both wisely submit to it.

CHARLES. The Swedes are a nation of warriors. I fear you think

more of the tailor who makes the coat, than of the soldier who wears it. Charles the Twelfth has little to hope from you.

IKLA. I beg your pardon—I adore him.

CHARLES. O, you do!

IKLA. Of course I do—as a warrior. I can't say quite so much for him at all times.

CHARLES. Is he not the same in peace as in war?

IKLA. That's my objection to him. In war I would have him nothing but what he is—brave, dashing, daring, reckless—fighting against all rules of war—victorious in defiance of them!

CHARLES. You're a little darling! and Charles the Twelfth—if he knew you—would be very fond of you. You have his measure exactly.

IKLA. Then I am sorry I'm not his tailor, for I would soon make him some better-looking clothes.

CHARLES. Clothes again! What can they signify?

IKLA. In war, nothing; but, in peace, everything. In war let him wear what he likes—nay, pardon me, Count, let him be even as quaint and as untidy as you are; but, in peace, let him assume the splendor that becomes a king; let him give balls, banquets, fêtes—more, mind you, for the good of others than himself, for this again is a part of the penalty he has to pay for the station that he fills. Moreover, if he would have his courtiers acceptable to ladies, let him cause them to make a corresponding change in *their* habiliments.

CHARLES. It's a pity you haven't some high situation about the court. It strikes me you would soon put them all to rights.

IKLA. Wouldn't I!

CHARLES. Where would you begin?

IKLA. With the king, to be sure. I always begin at the beginning.

CHARLES. How would you dress *him?*

IKLA (*pointing to picture*). So.

CHARLES. What, (*goes to it*) in all that lace, embroidery and frippery?—above all, with that mountebank-looking wig? You may spare yourself the attempt—Charles the Twelfth would rather die fifty deaths than appear, for one moment, before his council, in so ridiculous a guise.

IKLA (*aside*). My plan succeeds beyond my hopes. (*aloud*) Well, then, I won't attempt it; and yet it's to be lamented.

CHARLES. Why so?

IKLA. Because he can have no idea what a superior being he would look, if he would but give himself a fair chance. He is of a manly stature.

CHARLES. Yes.

IKLA. A noble appearance.

CHARLES. Yes.

IKLA. Has a handsome countenance.

CHARLES. Yes.

IKLA. And a princely bearing.

CHARLES. Ikla, (*walks up to her*) I feel inclined to eat you up.

IKLA. How devoted you must be to the king!

CHARLES. Well, I am; but I came here, as well as I can recollect, to tell you how devoted I am to *you;* only I confess myself awkward in these matters. I never cared for a woman till I saw you.

IKLA. Why, Count, you must be the very counterpart of the king. They say he *hates* women.

CHARLES (*taking her hand*). He does no such thing.

IKLA (*drawing away her hand*). How do you know?

CHARLES. I think I know him.

IKLA. You might as well say you think you know yourself.

CHARLES (*quickly*). How?

IKLA. Which no man does.

CHARLES. I know *you*, at all events. I know what a taking, striking, bewitching little creature you are: above all, I know how I love you—in that costume.

IKLA. A thousand thanks, Count, for the compliment you pay (*curtseying*) my dress.

CHARLES. Nay, nay, surely one may love a person, and yet fancy them more in one costume than in another;—but to the point, for I am a plain, blunt soldier, and like to know the worst that can happen to me. Do you love me?

IKLA. Is that the worst that can happen to you?

CHARLES. Ikla, I generally get the best of it at blows, but I own you beat me at words. I shall simply return to the charge—do you love me?

IKLA. One may love a person, and yet fancy them more in one costume than in another.

CHARLES. I said that of *you*—but I can't see how it applies to me.

IKLA. Then I'll tell you. *I wish to see you* in a dress like that. (*pointing to picture.*)

CHARLES. The King would not permit it, and if he would, I have no such dress. Now get over those two obstacles if you can.

IKLA. Easily. The King won't see you when you have them on, and the dress (*goes up behind*) hangs up in that room. Come, Count, go in and put it on. (*advances and looks up in his face*) Won't you, to oblige me?

CHARLES. I won't. I am not used to contradiction.

IKLA. No; you said you were not used to the ways of women; but if you would win their affection you must become so.

CHARLES. Do you mean to say, you little absolute tyrant, that you insist on this folly?

IKLA. O dear, no! I only asked it—but since you refuse me, farewell forever. (*crosses.*)

CHARLES. What is it you mean?

IKLA. To return to my own wild home. Why should I remain in a country where the first simple favor I ask is denied me? (*sits.*)

CHARLES. Well, well, I'll do it. (IKLA *jumps up*) Charles the Twelfth himself has yielded before to-day to the force of circumstances, and why should not I? (*going up to door—turns, and speaks in a tone of severe earnestness*) But mind, *for your life*, let no mortal eyes but yours behold me.

IKLA. My life shall answer it. (COUNT *enters the room, and closes the door*) Courage, Ikla, fortune still befriends you.

CHARLES (*opens the door, and looks out*). You had better lock the doors.

IKLA. I'll lock them all—*in turn.* (COUNT *closes the door*) I've beaten him so far. I play a desperate game—but if I win, I save a life of far more value than my own.

BAR. (*opens the door, and looks in*). Ikla, are you alone?

IKLA. I am, uncle, but you can't come in.

BAR. (*entering*). Nonsense! I tell you I must come in. I have something that I must say to you.

IKLA. Say it then—and beware you don't exceed three minutes.

BAR. What is the meaning of all this?

IKLA. Ask no questions, but speak and quickly; above all, speak low, or you may cease to have a head to speak with.

BAR. (*looking round the apartment*). What, is *he*——

IKLA (*pointing to door*). Yes, *he*—is—there. Now do you understand?

BAR. O, good gracious! thoroughly. I want to put you on your guard. The police have sent to say they have reason to believe that a young man is concealed somewhere in my chateau.

IKLA. I know it. I have concealed him.

BAR. You! Who is he? (*two steps forward to* IKLA.)

IKLA. Gustavus Reinold.

BAR. Ikla, you've murdered me!

IKLA. Not so bad as that, I hope.

BAR. Worse! you've made me commit suicide!

IKLA. Nay, if you commit suicide, it's your own fault.

BAR. I tell you that whoever harbors that traitor, is to be shot—by my own orders.

IKLA. Then I must say it serves you quite right—for you know well that Gustavus is no traitor.

BAR. What signifies that? If the king orders it, he must be shot—and so must I.

IKLA. Of course you must. But never mind—shooting is an easy death, and a gentlemanlike one.

BAR. For shame, Ikla, for shame! What made you take so fatal an interest in this wretched young man?

IKLA. His misfortunes. He is innocent; I know it, and my dear mother, your sister, knew it also. Forced by a cruel and un-

just sentence to fly his country, he found refuge and safety in ours.

RAR. Then why the devil did he leave it?

IKLA. To follow me when you sent for me.

BAR. (*aside*). Then it's my own doing again. (*crosses*—IKLA *goes up to door.*)

IKLA. Finding the pursuit so hot, I thought the best asylum for him was your chateau.

BAR. I'm much obliged to you for the preference. There is but one chance for us all—marry the Count, and then——

IKLA. If it depends on that, our chance is small; but listen to me—obey me, and all will yet be well. You must leave the room, and that instantly; but remain outside the door; when you hear me cough—(*cough*)—so—(*whispers to him—he seems astonished, and whispers to her with earnest anxiety—she whispers to him again.*)

BAR. (*breaking from her in great alarm*). I dare not do it! it would cost me my life.

IKLA. Which is already forfeited.

BAR. That's painfully true. I believe I'm lost either way.

IKLA. Do what I have told you, and fear nothing (*goes up to door.*)

BAR. I will, I will—but mind you——

IKLA. He's coming!—Fly!

[*Exit* BARON, *hurriedly off, and followed by* IKLA.

TACT AND FACT.

From John Courtney's Drama of "Time Tries All."

CHARACTERS.

TOM TACT, *a Merchant's Clerk.*
FANNY FACT, *a Lady's Maid.*

TIME—*Present period.*

SCENE.—*A handsome Drawing-room.*

[This is a pleasant little interlude, which can be readily given in any drawing-room. The scene is a familiar contrast between an underpaid merchant's clerk and an overpaid female servant of his employer.]

TOM TACT *enters and says:*

TACT. I want to see the governor. It's quite impossible I can carry on any longer at the rate I go, on seventy-five pounds a year; and I don't see why I should remain a junior clerk till I'm a senior in years. This is a strange world, they say it's round; it

certainly is not a square one, if I may judge by *my* domus and *this*. Here's luxury! Ah, well—one man's born rich, another poor; I shouldn't have found so much fault with the world if I had been born rich; but to be poor is the very deuce. A man can do nothing when he's poor!—he can't be witty—for no one will laugh at his jokes, however good they may be; he can't—yes, he can do one thing—he can make love, which generally makes him poorer still.

Enter FANNY FACT.

Ah, Miss Fact, good day!

FANNY. Good day, Mr. Tact; pleasant weather this.

TACT. Yes, very, for those who can enjoy it.

FANNY. Ah! enjoyment, Mr. Tact, is only for those who can pay for it.

TACT. The very thing I was saying to myself as you came in. Singular reciprocity of feeling, isn't it?

FANNY. Very singular. (*glancing at him*) I always thought him a nice little fellow. (*aside.*)

TACT. You have a snug situation here, I suppose, Miss Fact.

FANNY. Pretty well, Mr. Fact.

TACT. Fact and Tact—very odd—singular coincidence—though odd—perquisites of course?

FANNY. Yes.

TACT. Tolerable wages?

FANNY. Yes.

TACT. That's right!—give you joy, Miss Fact, of so comfortable a position in life.

FANNY. I don't know about comfort, Mr. Tact; there are other things than those you have named, to make up comfort.

TACT. You are right, Miss Fact!—I know—home—your own home—fire-side—snug corner—Mr. Tact—Mrs. Tact—the little Tacts—one's own master!

FANNY. Exactly, Mr. Tact;—there's no knowing what we servants have to put up with.

TACT (*aside*). Junior clerks particularly; I have to put up with seventy-five pounds a year.

FANNY. I have a great deal, I can assure you.

TACT. And I have very little. (*aside*) I dare say you have—(*looking at her*) She's indubitable pretty. (*aside*) You have a holiday now and then, I suppose, Miss Fact.

FANNY. Oh, yes; I have one on Monday next. (*glancing at him.*)

TACT. That's very odd: I've one on Monday next. You'll take a trip, of course?

FANNY. Where am I to trip to, and with whom? (*glancing.*)

TACT. 'Gad! I'll take her out. She has saved a little I dare say. I'll sound her. (*aside*) You'd like a trip, of course?

FANNY. Ah, that I should! Do you often take a trip, Mr. Tact?

TACT. Oh, yes, very often. Too often on seventy-five pounds a year. (*aside*) What sort of a trip would you like, Miss Fact?

FANNY. Oh, suppose we say to Hampton Court by rail—dine—walk—then tea—back to town—the theatre—home—that's not much.

TACT (*aside, takes out a long, narrow entry-book*). To Hampton per rail, 5s; dinner for two, 15s: tea, 5s,—one pound; rail home, 5s; theatre, 5s;—just the money—seventy-five pounds a year—thirty shillings a week—one week's salary gone in one day.—Accounts closed. (*shuts book*) Good morning, Miss Fact! [*Exit suddenly.*

FANNY. Well, I'm sure! Good day, Mr. Tact! A calculating gentleman—nothing speculative about him but his eyes—has all the inclination for the enjoyments of life, but lacks the enterprise; one eye on matrimony—the other on the savings bank.

LIVING ON FALSE PRETENCES.

From J. M. Morton's Farce of "Done on Both Sides."

CHARACTERS.

MR. WHIFFLES, *a Retired Exciseman.*
MR. JOHN BROWNJOHN, *an Impecunious Gentleman.*
MRS. WHIFFLES, *an Assumer of Dignity.*

TIME—*The present day.*

SCENE.—*An apartment, simply furnished, with two doors, one on each side, and two windows at the back; fireplace, a table, chairs, etc.*

[The object of this scene is to portray the deceits practised by those living in a style unsupported by their income. Mr. Whiffles should be a nervous, anxious and awkward man of middle age as a contrast to his wife, who is younger, bold, ingenious and self-confident. Mr. Brownjohn is a rollicking, daring adventurer, who, having seen Whiffles' daughter at some social party, conceives the idea of marrying the girl with the view of gaining for himself a comfortable home through quartering himself upon, as he presumes, a well-to-do father-in-law. Although thoroughly in debt he assumes the air, manner and tone of an independent gentleman. The dress of Whiffles is of the quality denoted as shabby-genteel, while that of his visitor should be the costume of a fast man.]

WHIFFLES *discovered kneeling at the fireplace, and rubbing a copper coal-scuttle with great energy.* MRS. WHIFFLES *cleaning the window with a cloth.*

WHIF. (*pushing coal-scuttle away*). O, bother the coal-scuttle! The more I try to get a polish on it, the more I can't.

Mrs. W. You needn't abuse the poor, helpless, unprotected coal-scuttle, Mr. Whiffles.

Whif. I merely say, Mrs. W., and I say it emphatically, that this copper receptacle for fuel is making a very ungrateful return for the liberal amount of friction that I've been lavishing upon it for the last three-quarters of an hour. (*rising*) O, my back! Jemima, Jemima, come and straighten me!

Mrs. W. What a hurry you are in to be sure! Wait a little.

Whif. Unfeeling woman! You wouldn't have me go about describing a semicircle for the rest of my life, would you?

Mrs. W. (*coming down, and helping him*). Well, there——

Whif. Thank ye. Ahem! Mrs. Whiffles, since I listened to your advice, and consented to break up our establishment——

Mrs. W. Our establishment! Ha! ha! consisting of one scrubby servant girl——

Whif. And a charity boy, twice a week to clean the knives and forks, Mrs. W. You won't overlook that important item, I hope. However, since that period six months have elapsed, during which time you must confess that I have applied myself with considerable zeal—I might say, enthusiasm—to the various occupations of household drudgery that have fallen to my lot; while you have attended to the cooking, and our daughter Lydia to the washing, ironing, darning, and mending department, I have shaken carpets, cleaned stoves, inclusive of fenders and fire-irons; initiated myself into the practical properties of blacklead and hearthstone; polished tables, chairs, boots and shoes. But I now candidly confess, Mrs. Whiffles, that I have had, if not too much, at least quite enough, of it. In other words, Mrs. W., we must keep a servant.

Mrs. W. Mr. W., we can't afford it. We must be economical. If we were not, could we live as comfortably as we do?

Whif. Comfortably! (*rubbing his back*) Well, perhaps my Jemima is right after all.

Mrs. W. Perhaps? Mr. W., did you ever know Jemima in the wrong, sir? Depend upon it, it is much better to be envied than pitied. Thanks to your exertions, added to mine and Lydia's, there's not a house in Arabella Row, Pimlico, can boast of more credit or respectability than ours; and if we can only get our precious Lydia comfortably settled——

Whif. But there's the rub. I don't see any chance of it.

Mrs. W. When did you ever see anything in your life, Mr. W., unless it was thrust under your very nose? How is it, I should like to know, that our friends and acquaintances consider us to be so much better to do in the world than we really are? Simply because we give our friends and acquaintances tea and muffins every other Monday throughout the year. And where do those "teas and muffins" come from, Mr. W.? Why, from the money we save by sending the servant about her business, and doing the work ourselves.

WHIF. Invaluable Jemima! What you say is perfectly true. Egad, I do believe my neighbors take me for a retired Lord of the Treasury, or a Commander-in-Chief on half pay, instead of a poor devil of a superannuated exciseman, with a paltry hundred a year.

MRS. W. Never mind their mistake, if we can profit by it; and, as I said before, if we can only get our darling Lydia comfortably and genteelly settled——

WHIF. But, as I said before, I don't see that our darling Lydia is one jot nearer finding a husband than she was when I first took to beating carpets, cleaning stoves, inclusive of fenders——

MRS. W. Now do hold your tongue! I've had quite enough of that.

WHIF. To be candid with you, so have I, and a trifle to spare.

MRS. W. (*mysteriously*). Whiffles, what if I were to tell you that Lydia had made an impression?

WHIF. No!

MRS. W. A conquest.

WHIF. No! Who's the unhappy victim?—I mean, who's the fortunate individual?

MRS. W. Listen. Don't you remember, about three weeks ago a young gentleman picking you out of the gutter in Fleet Street?

WHIF. I can't say I do; but I perfectly remember his knocking me into it.

MRS. W. A mere accident, for which, while you were lying insensible, he most handsomely apologized.

WHIF. What was the use of his apologizing to me when I was insensible?

MRS. W. Never mind. Well, last Tuesday evening, at Mrs. Broadside's tea-party, who should I spy in one corner of the room, with a cup of coffee in one hand and a piece of buttered toast in the other, but your young friend——

WHIF. My young friend! The fellow that knocked me——

MRS. W. Never mind. O, Whiffles! such a gentlemanly looking person; and, from what I managed to squeeze out of Mrs. Broadsides, just the young man to push his way in the world.

WHIF. I can answer for his pushing his way in Fleet Street.

MRS. W. Never mind. Well, Mr. Brownjohn (for that's the gentleman's name) kept his eye fixed on Lydia the whole evening; in short, he looked at her as you used to look at me, Toby, before you popped the question. O, Toby, that look of yours—I think I see it now. (WHIFFLES *looks tenderly*) No, it wasn't that at all. (WHIFFLES *tries again*) That's not a bit like it, sir.

WHIF. Isn't it? It's such a plaguy long time ago.

MRS. W. Well, Toby, Mr. Brownjohn would insist upon seeing us home; of course I couldn't say no. And then he requested permission to call; of course I said, yes.

WHIF. Don't you think you've been rather precipitate?

MRS. W. Not at all; for I've been instituting inquiries respect-

ing Mr. Brownjohn all round the neighborhood, for the last two days, and the result is in the highest degree satisfactory. In the first place, as to his domestic habits, he never comes home late at night——

WHIF. That's good!

MRS. W. But always early in the morning.

WHIF. O!

MRS. W. Then, I find, he's deep in all his tradesmen's books——

WHIF. That doesn't look well.

MRS. W. On the contrary; for, if he wasn't well off, do you suppose they'd give him credit? No, no. Depend upon it, he's the husband for Lydia.

WHIF. Well, but when does this gentleman intend to call?

MRS. W. He didn't say.

WHIF. That's a pity. It would be rather awkward if he should happen to pop in, and find me polishing up my friend there. (*points to the scuttle.*)

MRS. W. No fear of that; he's too well bred to call in the morning. (*loud rat tat at the street door.*)

WHIF. *and* MRS. W. } What's that? (WHIFFLES *runs to right window, and* MRS. WHIFFLES *to left window, and look out.*)

Enter BROWNJOHN.

BROWN. Really, my dear Mrs. Whiffles, I'm quite horrified that you should have had the trouble. (*crosses.*)

MRS. W. Don't allude to it. Good gracious! I declare, you're quite wet! I'd no idea it rained!

BROWN. A slight shower, that's all. (*shakes his hat over table*) You see, Mrs. Whiffles, I have lost no time in availing myself of your kind permission to pay my respects.

MRS. W. O, sir, I'm sure I'm delighted, and so is Mr. Whiffles. Whiffles! (*sees* WHIFFLES *rubbing the table with his coat tail*) Mr. Whiffles!

WHIF. Yes, my dear!

MRS. W. Mr. Brownjohn, Mr. Whiffles; Mr. Whiffles, Mr. Brownjohn.

BROWN. (*aside, after examining* WHIFFLES'. Ah! a stupid, good tempered looking specimen of antiquity enough. (*shakes* WHIFFLES' *hand*) Mr. Whiffles, I'm delighted to make your acquaintance. (*puts his hat on table;* WHIFFLES *instantly takes it off again*) No, no! (*puts hat on table.*)

WHIF. Well, but—(*taking hat off table again.*)

BROWN. O, very well; if you insist upon it, you may hold it. (*aside, and looking about him*) Everything looks remarkably clean and comfortable here; and there's a sort of quiet, snug, three-and-a-quarter per cent. look about Whiffles that's unmistakable. Then the daughter is really charming. Nevertheless, I won't speak on

till I've fathomed the depth a little. (*aloud*) Allow me to assure you, my dear Whiffles—I beg pardon—I ought to have said Mister, and, if you insist on the Mister——

WHIF. Oh, bother! I don't care about the Mister.

BROWN. Then I'll omit the Mister. As I was saying, Whiffles—my dear Whiffles—ever since I have resided in this respectable locality, I have heard so much of you! I may say, the very atmosphere seems charged with the name of Whiffles. For my part, I go to bed with Whiffles, I get up with Whiffles, I breathe Whiffles, I eat Whiffles, I drink Whiffles; in short, you haunt me, Whiffles! 'Pon my life, you do!

WHIF. Dear, dear! I'm sure I'm very sorry——

BROWN. Sorry! You ought to be flattered—delighted! for, with me, the influence of the name of Whiffles is such, that I may safely aver, affirm, make oath, and declare, that I never lay my head on my pillow at night, or raise it again in the morning, without feeling a sensation of craving, a sort of aching void——

WHIF. Well, do you know, that's just my case, sometimes. But I find it goes away after breakfast.

BROWN. I'm afraid you misunderstand me. I mean, I have felt that there's something wanting to complete my happiness.

WHIF. And that was——

BROWN. You'll never guess; so don't try. That necessary ingredient to my felicity was neither more nor less than your knocker!

WHIF. My knocker!

BROWN. I mean the application of it—the opportunity of familiarizing my hand to it. In short, I panted for the privilege of dropping in upon you at all hours of the day—of breakfasting, lunching, dining, teaing, supping, and now and then taking a bed of you. And what my ingenuity failed to bring about, kind fortune accomplished for me. And now, Whiffles, I'll never leave you again—(*slaps him on the back*)—never!

WHIF. Thank ye. But I don't exactly——

BROWN. Understand? The deuce you don't! Surely you remember our fortunate meeting in Fleet street?

WHIF. What, when you knocked me into the——

BROWN. Exactly. You droll fellow, you. I see you never forget a good thing! Funny Whiffles! The fact is, I was in a devil of a hurry to get to by broker's, having a few spare thousands to invest. (*with emphasis.*)

MRS. W. (*aside to* WHIFFLES). A few spare thousands! You hear that, Mr. Whiffles?

BROWN. Ah, Whiffles, you little know how much I am indebted to that lucky accident.

WHIF. Oh, yes, I do. I was obliged to order a new pair of trousers, which I couldn't get made under seventeen and sixpence.

But, my dear sir, if you were in such a devil of a hurry, why did you walk ?

BROWN. Bless you, I always walk when I'm in a hurry ; when I particularly wish to be behind time, I ride. Ha ! ha ! I say, Whiffles, capital furniture you've got here—must have cost you a deal of money.

WHIF. (*with affected grandeur*). Really, I forget——

BROWN. (*aside*). I begin to have my suspicions. Perhaps they're not so well off after all—unless my friend Whiffles is a bit of a Jew. What if he is ? So much the better. The less he spends, the more he'll have to leave. (*aloud*) How the deuce you contrive to get such a polish on your table, I can't imagine.

WHIF. Ah, it takes a deal of rubbing, I can tell you. I've been at it for half an hour this morning.

BROWN. You ?

WHIF. Yes—no—I mean—that is——

MRS. W. (*interposing*). He means he has been superintending the servant. (*aside to* WHIFFLES) Toby, you're putting your foot in it.

WHIF. Wheugh ! (*taking the leather out of his pocket, and wiping his face with it.*)

BROWN. Holloa ! what's that .

WHIF. (*forgetting himself*). This ? Oh, this is the leather that I've been rubbing——

MRS. W. The silver with. (*interposing.*)

WHIF. No, the copper. (MRS. WHIFFLES *gives him a pinch*) Oh, yes—exactly—I mean the silver—it's a little eccentricity I have. I always do it, and very hard work it is, too.

BROWN. (*aside*). Silver ! That sounds well—and "very hard work, too." Then there's plenty of it : they must be well off. (*aloud*) I perfectly agree with you, Whiffles—I certainly *do* like my plate to look clean.

WHIF. Oh, I've nothing to do with that ; Mrs. Whiffles washes the plates and dishes.

BROWN. Eh ?

MRS. W. (*coming hastily between them*). Ha ! ha ! ha ! Whiffles is such a wag ! (*giving* WHIFFLES *another pinch*) The fact is, Mr. Brown-john, the day before yesterday we gave Nancy a holiday——

WHIF. Who's Nancy ?

MRS. W. Why, the cook. (*aside to* WHIFFLES) How stupid you are !

WHIF. Oh—ah—yes ! The fact is, I never know any of the creatures' names.

BROWN. (*aside*). *Any* of their names ? Quite an establishment ! They *must* be well off.

MRS. W. Well, you must know, that I was complaining to Mr. Whiffles that—that—(*aside to* WHIFFLES) What did I call her ?

WHIF. (*bothered*). Eh ? Oh, Patty !

MRS. W. I say, I was complaining that Patty didn't do her work——

BROWN. (*aside*). Nancy! Patty! Two of them!—That looks well.

MRS. W. When—ha! ha! ha! I can't help laughing—Mr. Whiffles said I found fault without a cause, and offered to bet me a wager that I couldn't do the girl's work in double the time; and so—ha! ha!—just for the fun of the thing, I accepted the wager, and won it with five minutes to spare. Ha! ha! ha! (*aside to* WHIFFLES) Why don't you laugh?

WHIF. Ha! ha! ha! (*aside*) I very nearly let the cat out of the bag. Never mind, I'll make up for it. (*aloud*) By the by, Mrs. Whiffles, talking of servants, where is—I say, where is—(*aside to her*) What do you call her? I know. (*aloud*) Where is Peggy?

BROWN. (*aside*). Peggy? Another of them!

MRS. W. Why, don't you know I sent her out with John, the footman?

BROWN. (*aside*). John, the footman! That settles it—they must be rolling in wealth.

WHIF. Then, Mrs. Whiffles, (*assuming grandeur*) once for all, I will not allow my servants to be continually sent out of the house without my permission.

BROWN. (*aside*). Holloa! Whiffles is getting lively.

WHIF. And let me tell you, madam——

BROWN. (*interposing*). My dear Whiffles!

WHIF. Excuse me, Mr. Brownjohn. I say, madam, if this happens again, I'll instantly break up our town establishment and return to Whiffles Park. (*aside*) There I had him.

BROWN. (*aside*). Whiffles Park! It's too much—I'm getting quite bewildered.

WHIF. You hear, madam! (*aside to* MRS. WHIFFLES) I'll go and finish dusting the next room, and be sure you don't let him come in till you hear me cough three times. (*aloud, and assuming his grandeur*) Remember, madam! Mr. Brownjohn, your most obedient. (*going off to door, stops, and calls*) Sally, tell the coachman I want him! [*Exit.*

BROWN. (*aside*). Sally! Coachman! Egad, I am in luck! I'd no notion of anything of this sort. I must clinch matters at once. (*aloud*) My dear Mrs. Whiffles, since you are so very pressing, I at once accept your invitation!

MRS. W. My invitation! (*hesitatingly.*)

BROWN. Which you gave me at Mrs. Broadsides' the other evening. Your flattering words on that occasion were, "My dear Mr. Brownjohn, you must come and dine with us"—with an amiable emphasis on the *must.*

MRS. W. Yes—of course—I perfectly remember——

BROWN. I thought so. (*aside*) Considering she never opened her lips on the subject, she must have an extraordinary memory. (*aloud*) To which I replied, "Excellent Mrs. Whiffles, I will"—and here I am.

Mrs. W. Yes—I see—and now—what day shall we say? To-morrow fortnight, or Monday three weeks? But perhaps that's too early?

Brown. By several degrees not early enough, Mrs. Whiffles. I'm come to dine with you to-day.

Mrs. W. To-day? Well, now, that's so kind of you. (*aside*) There isn't an atom of anything in the house. (*aloud*) But you see, Mr. Brownjohn, we dine so preposterously late——

Brown. Can't be too late for me. (*aside*) I very often have to wait for *my* dinner.

Mrs. W. But, to-day, somehow or other, we happen to dine so ridiculously early——

Brown. So much the better, for I'm absurdly hungry.

Mrs. W. (*aside*). Here's a pretty situation! I must put him off.

Brown. Now, pray, Mrs. Whiffles, don't put yourself out of the way on my account—the plainest dinner possible, I beg. A little soup—fish, if you have it—if not, game—pastry to follow. Then dessert—a pine, or hot-house grapes, or some trifle of that sort. The whole to conclude with a bottle or two of old Whiffles' Madeira—I mean, Whiffles' old Madeira—and—I'm satisfied.

Mrs. W. (*aside*). Moderate creature! (*aloud*) Well but——

Brown. Not a word more, I beg. I'll just tell my rascal that I shan't want the carriage to-day, and be back again immediately. (*going*) My compliments to Whiffles, and the sooner he puts the champagne in ice the better. (*looking at his watch*) Dear me! half past twelve. I ought to have been at home to receive the Marquis of Guzzleton. Ha! ha! Considering this is the third time that Guzzleton has solicited an interview, he'll be rather annoyed. Never mind—hang Guzzy! Guzzy must wait! Ladies, au revoir! [*Exit.*

Mrs. W. Here's a pretty piece of business! Whiffles! Mr. Whiffles!

Whiffles *appears with a carpet broom.*

Whif. Is he gone?

Mrs. W. Yes.

Whif. That's lucky.

Mrs. W. No, it isn't; for he's only gone to tell his rascal he shan't want the carriage to-day, and say a few words to Guzzy——

Whif. Who's Guzzy?

Mrs. W. The Marquis of Guzzleton,—a *friend* of Mr. Brownjohn's. And what do you think he's going to do next?

Whif. I haven't an idea.

Mrs. W. Why, he's coming back to dine with us. Lud a mercy! I shouldn't wonder if he brought Guzzy with him.

Whif. Dine with us? Pooh! it can't be—it mustn't be! Didn't you say so?

Mrs. W. I tried, but I couldn't; he wouldn't let me get a word in edgeways.

WHIF. Then all I can say is, he'll get no dinner here, or Guzzy either. The larder's a desert.

MRS. W. How can you say so? I'm sure there's a very nice piece of cold roast beef.

WHIF. So there is—baked last Sunday. Let me see. We can have it hashed, boiled, stewed, and cold—that ll be four dishes.

MRS. W. Pooh! Mr. Brownjohn expects soup. By the by, I could manage a little soup—but he wants fish, game, hot-house grapes, iced champagne, and Madeira.

WHIF. Does he? I wish he may get 'em. If he had put his visit off till next week, we might have managed; I should have received my quarter's pension; but now, in the present state of finances, one such meal as you talk about, and I go into the Gazette.

MRS. W. Then what's to be done? Toby, let's set the kitchen chimney on fire.

WHIF. A very good plan, only we should have to pay for putting it out again. No, no; I have it! a capital idea! Let's all go to bed and have leeches on—won't that do?

MRS. W. Then all I can say is, when Mr. Brownjohn comes, exposure must follow, for he'll immediately find us out, depend upon it.

TWO IN THE MORNING.

From Charles Matthew's Farce of "A Bachelor's Bed-room."

CHARACTERS.

MR. NEWPENNY, *a Bachelor.*
A STRANGER.

TIME—*The present period.*

SCENE.—*A bachelor's bed-room; in centre of flat a window; a bed with curtains; fireplace; tongs, bellows, table, arm-chair, and the ordinary furniture of a bed-room. Two candles on table and snuffers.*

[Mr. Newpenny, a nervous bachelor, having retired to rest, is awakened by a violent rapping on the other side of the way. After vainly endeavoring to continue his slumbers amid the noise, he expostulates fruitlessly, and finally, as a desperate resort, invites the locked-out gentleman to ascend into his own chamber and there rest until daylight.]

A STRANGER *enters door hastily, passing before* NEWPENNY *who is near the door. He appears wet and muddy—a cigar in his mouth and a dripping umbrella in his hand—he comes down.*

STRANGER. Thank you. Here's your latch-key.

NEWPENNY. Key! I lent you a key, and you return me a corkscrew.

STRAN. I can't compliment you on your staircase; it's steep as a ladder and as dark as pitch.

NEW. Why, you see, not expecting visitors at this hour, the lamp was ou . (*seeing that the door is left open*) Have you any one else with you ? (*the* STRANGER *shakes the rain off his hat, and puts it down with his umbrella on a chair*—NEWPENNY *instantly removes them*) You've left the door open; I'm sure you're not aware of it, but—deuce take him. (*seeing that the other does not attend, puts the candle on the table, and shuts the door, during which time the* STRANGER *goes to the window and throws it open.*)

STRAN. Exactly opposite!—my own window, I declare—there it is, sure enough. (*walks away from it and paces the stage.*)

NEW. (*shutting the window after him*). Ah! you live on the second floor opposite, do you? Hollo! why you're smoking, and I've a particular objection——

STRAN. Am I?—I didn't know it. (*puts his cigar on the mantelpiece.*)

NEW. They didn't expect you home to-night, it seems?

STRAN. (*to himself*). It's very extraordinary.

NEW. What is it?

STRAN. What has just occurred.

NEW. Oh! my asking you up? Why, as you say, it was an odd thing to do—but——

STRAN. (*without hearing him*). Not to open the door—my own door! Do you think, sir, they heard me knock?

NEW. Do I think! Oh, my gracious! You don't really ask me such a question seriously.

STRAN. Then it must have been done on purpose. They must have bribed Richards to leave me out in the street, and on such a night, too—a devil of a night—a plot; don't you think it so yourself, sir?

NEW. Why, if you ask me my opinion——

STRAN. In a pouring rain—I'm drenched to the skin.

NEW. (*perceiving that the* STRANGER *is wet through and is inundating the carpet*). Oh, my goodness! Why, my dear sir, you must be soaked through and through! (*goes and fetches a towel.*)

STRAN. (*to himself*). Shut me out of my own house at two in the morning! (NEWPENNY *follows him about, sopping the wet after him*) They guessed it was me. They must have known my voice. (*sees* NEWPENNY) Hallo! what on earth are you about?

NEW. (*follows his trace with the towel*). Nothing—nothing—only I'm rather particular about my floor, and you're dripping like a water-spout.

STRAN. So would you if you'd been an hour *under* one. (*squeezes the water out of his coat-tails.*)

NEW. (*sopping it up*). Oh, my gracious! he was an earthquake just now—now he's a deluge.

STRAN. What a fidgetty little fellow this is. (*going up.*)

NEW. Oh! it's no use. I give it up—there! (*throws away the towel, during which time the stranger seems to reflect.*)

STRAN. Dark as pitch; no one stirring—*that's* quite clear.

NEW. You see, sir, I'm getting a bit of fire in again, for you.

STRAN. You're quite right. And yet, generally, a feather would wake her—what can it mean? (*walks to and fro.*)

NEW. If he's going to stamp up and down all night, in this way, he'll be an agreeable companion. Sir! sir!

STRAN. What's the matter?

NEW. Wouldn't you like to rest yourself a little? You see here is a capital fire now; and as it is just half-past two, by my watch —(*yawns.*)

STRAN. Don't yawn!

NEW. I won't—but it strikes me we might begin to think about going to sleep. Eh! what do you think? (*blows the fire.*)

STRAN. (*talks to himself, and takes off his coat.*) Sleep, indeed? ah! (*throwing the coat on the bed*) I wish I could sleep. (*tries to pull off his boots by the help of a chair*) It's easy enough to talk of sleep—they stick like wax! (*throws down the bed clothes as if going to bed*) You don't happen to have such a thing as a boot-jack, sir, do you?

NEW. Eh! hallo! what's he about? (*runs to him*) You'll excuse me, sir, but there's one thing I'm rather particular about, and that is, sleeping alone—I always sleep alone.

STRAN. Oh! What, you've only one bed then?

NEW. Only one! I dare say you think I am very meanly furnished; but you know you are not compelled to stay here if you don't like it. I wish now I could get rid of him.

STRAN. (*on side of bed*). To shut the door against me in a pouring rain.

NEW. Come, sir, there's an arm-chair at your service, close to the fire, and you can sleep there very comfortably—or not, just as you please.

STRAN. (*trying the arm-chair*). Ay, ay; any thing will do for me.

NEW (*arranging his pillow*). Good night, then—or rather good morning—for it's almost—(*yawns.*)

STRAN. Oh! for heaven's sake, don't yawn. If there's anything I hate in the world——

NEW. Well, upon my soul, that's a good one. I mustn't yawn in my own bed-room, now! (*sits on the side of the bed—jumps up again*) Hallo! (*perceiving coat*) Oh, my gracious! if he hasn't put his nasty wet coat on the bed (*throws it on a chair.*)

STRAN. Ugh! how wretchedly cold I am, to be sure! I say, sir, have you anything I could throw over my shoulders.

NEW. (*behind the curtain—affects not to hear*) Good night, sir, good night.

STRAN. Oh! here is a jacket!

NEW. Stop, stop! I beg your pardon—it's impossible—you cannot get it on—it is a new jacket for my little nephew—to-morrow is his birth-day—and you will burst the seams!

STRAN. Oh, no! I am very thin.

NEW. Why not put on your own coat?

STRAN. It is soaked through—you have no idea how wet it is.

NEW. Oh, yes I have—but you can't get the boy's jacket on, I tell you.

STRAN. No? (*puts it on*) What do you say to that?

NEW. Oh, my gracious! (STRANGER *sits down*) Oh, what a man! —well, don't cross your arms, then, or you will certainly split it—you must be very careful, or——

STRAN. That infernal Richards, too—he must have heard me knock.

NEW. I give it up. (*going back to bed*) Oh, dear! oh, dear, what a fool I have been. Never mind! catch me asking any one up again—that's all. Oh! I'm chilled to the bone; I'll pop into bed, dressing-gown and all, and see if I can't get a little warmth into me. (*gets into bed*) Have the kindness to put out the candle, sir, if you please; I can't sleep in a blaze of light. (*a moment's silence.*)

STRAN. You're a bachelor, I suppose.

NEW. Yes, yes—good night.

STRAN. A bachelor! What a charm there is in that single word. Bachelor! freedom—independence—tranquillity—no troubles—no cares—no anxieties. Bachelor! humph! his sleep is sweet and undisturbed——

NEW. Is it?

STRAN. Bachelor! (*rises*) bachelor! (*tramps up and down.*)

NEW (*sitting up*). My dear sir! if you could make it *convenient* to leave off tramping up and down the room in that manner, I should esteem it a favor—these small houses are so slight that every step shakes me in my bed—besides, you'll wake the lady underneath—she only came to lodge here yesterday—and she'll think there's a wild beast over her.

STRAN. You're right—you're right. I didn't know I was doing so. What a fidgetty little frump it is—there. (*bangs the chair down on the floor*) There, I'll sit quietly down and then I suppose I'll offend nobody. (*sits and rocks the chair.*)

NEW. Now he's knocking the furniture about. Oh, what a man! Do pray be quiet, sir. Deuce take it—I wish now I had left you where you were. I asked you up to stop your noise, and much, I see, I've gained by it. (*knocking heard against the floor from underneath*) There, I thought so—there's the lady on the first floor, knocking for us to be quiet. Come, do let us go to sleep! it really is high time.

STRAN. (*lights cigar—goes to window and throws it up*). Aye, aye. There it is—my very *own* window—there's no disguising that fact.

NEW. (*sneezing*). I cannot get warm again, do what I will. My bed's like ice.

STRAN. (*at window*). Here will I take up my station for the night —they cannot escape me so.

NEW. (*not seeing him*). Sir, will you be kind enough to throw something over me. (STRANGER *puts his wet coat over him.* NEWPENNY *shouts* "No, no!" *and throws it off*) I'm very much afraid I've caught cold, for I'm shivering in a way that—sir? Hallo! Where is he? (*leans out of the bed and sees him at the window*) Why you've got the window open!

STRAN. What do you say? (*quietly.*)

NEW. I say shut that window, sir.

STRAN. It's for the smoke.

NEW. You're giving me cold.

STRAN. Your chimney smokes, I tell you.

NEW. No such thing (*coughs*) and yet—why it's yourself—you've lighted your cigar again.

STRAN. There—I've thrown it out of the window. (*throws out the cigar.*)

NEW. (*kneeling in bed*). Will you shut the window or will you not?

STRAN. (*shuts it*). There, there—don't put yourself in a passion —from the moment you say it's unpleasant—that's enough for—anything for a quiet life.

NEW. A quiet life, indeed!

STRAN. You've surely a right to do as you like in your own room, and make yourself comfortable.

NEW. Very comfortable.

STRAN. Particularly after the hospitality you've shown me——

NEW. Yes, it was a happy hit I made.

STRAN. There's nothing in the world I wouldn't do to please you, and show you that your civility has not been extended to——

NEW. Yes—very well—I'm satisfied. There, I'm going to sleep. He'll chatter for a week.

STRAN. (*seating himself in the arm-chair and whistles*). Have you been long in this neighborhood, sir? (NEWPENNY *turns in bed to avoid answering. Louder*) I was inquiring, sir, whether you had lived long in this neighborhood.

NEW. Yes, yes, I have.

STRAN. You have? (*jumps up*) He has! then he must know all the people in it. What if I—yes I will! (*goes to the head of the bed and pulls open the curtains*) Then you must know all the people in it —only imagine then—(*strikes the bed-post violently with his hand*)— for I'll tell you all, sir; it will ease my bursting heart, and you'll be able to advise me—only imagine, then, I say—(*strikes bed-post again*)

NEW. Stop!

STRAN. What's the matter?

NEW. Stop—I won't keep you a moment—I'll get up and listen —I prefer it.

STRAN. Oh, no, don't disturb yourself.

NEW. No, I won't, but I prefer getting up.

STRAN. Oh, if you prefer it, that's another thing. (*walks to the fire.*)

NEW. Yes, it's much better. Oh, my gracious, what a man! (*putting on his slippers.*)

STRAN. Don't hurry—don't hurry on my account—I'm getting a little warm now. (*stands with his back to the fire.*)

NEW. (*behind curtain—sneezes*). What a man! There, (*comes out*) if I must hear a story, I may as well hear it by the fireside comfortably, and as there seems no chance of my getting a wink of sleep to-night, (*looking for his cap, etc.*) I shall be better so—much better so—where's my cap? (*taking it from* STRANGER'S *head*) There, now, then, for your story—let's see—where were you? (*yawns and sits at table, the* STRANGER *seated by the fire*)

STRAN. Don't yawn! I'm afraid you're too sleepy to follow me.

NEW. Not a bit! I'm wide awake! very odd if I wasn't! I'm as lively as a grig—so, as you were saying——

STRAN. Well, then, as I was saying—(*takes the other candle mechanically from the table, lights it at the other on the table, and places them together as he speaks*) I'd give a hundred pounds if it was but daylight.

NEW. Don't mention it; so would I. (*takes the snuffers and puts the candle out again.*)

A MAN'S DOUBLE.

From Hubert Lille's Farce of "As Like as Two Peas."

CHARACTERS.

MR. RICHARDS, *a Lawyer.*
MRS. RICHARDS.
MRS. PRITCHARDS.

TIME—*Present day.*

SCENE.—*A room or study in* RICHARDS' *house, handsomely furnished. Door in the back. Bureau with papers. An arm-chair, sofa, etc.*

[This very ingenious farce, from which has been selected the following scene, is based upon the misrepresentation of a lawyer who, unknown to his wife, has indulged in a career of flash life in London. She accidentally is informed of his vagaries, of his visits to Vauxhall, Cremorne, Casino and other dancing saloons, the resort of not over reputable characters. All these rumors she discredits until her servant innocently relates to her a current report as to her husband's being seen at the masquerade, where, disguised as a

sailor, he executes a hornpipe. When taxed by his wife for his reputed indecencies the lawyer laughs at the idea of a member of the Middle Temple being seen at such places, much less of his dancing a hornpipe. To account for the currency of such derogatory reports, Richards convinces her that an individual, his exact double, is the being who, in reality, indulges in all that had been popularly attributed to him. Thoroughly satisfied with this explanation, Mrs. Richards has left the study upon a misconception that a lady desires to see her.]

RICHARDS *discovered alone.*

RICHARDS. Poor soul! how I have blinded her! And what a brilliant idea—worthy of Mephistopheles himself, and so very original. No one but a barrister could have ever dreamt of creating another self—a double—a phantasmagoria! That will now exist only in the brain of my little wife, but won't I profit by it? I shall no longer dread being recognized at the Casino, Vauxhall, Cremorne. I can always say, "It was that confounded fellow again, my dear," then if she should add, "Henry, you know you were out late that very evening!" then I can rejoin with, "Of course I was! how could I be at home when I was retained in that important consultation in Lumley and Gye?" Ha, ha! but what a scamp I am! Mr. Richards, you're a scoundrel, and you ought to indict yourself at the Old Bailey, and sentence yourself to six months' hard labor. But Mr. Richards is weak, Mr. Richards is susceptible, and he can't help it; and he is also ashamed to confess that he is very much fascinated with a certain widow, who thinks Mr. Richards is a single gentleman, and so invites him to a pic-nic at Richmond, and Mr. Richards can go now, and in perfect safety, because if he is detected and is accused of being with a pic-nic at a widow—no, I mean with a widow at a pic-nic—no, I mean a widow at a pic-nic—he can say, "That's that confounded fellow again!—what is to be done?" Oh, what a splendid idea! and what a clever fellow I am to have hit upon such a one! I can now go anywhere! [*Exit.*

Enter MRS. PRITCHARDS *with* MRS. RICHARDS.

MRS. R. My husband will be here in a moment—pray be seated. Heavens! what do I see?—Fanny Jones?

MRS. P. Ellen Smith, my schoolfellow! Ellen Smith, you here?

MRS. R. Oh, I am at home. Let me present you to Mrs. Richards, wife of Mr. Richards, of the Middle Temple.

MRS. P. The wife of the eminent barrister I have been advised to lay my case before—how delightful?

MRS. R. Sit down, sit down, and tell me all about yourself.

MRS. P. (*sits*). Oh, my dear, mine is a melancholy story! In the first place, you must know I've been been married.

MRS. R. Been married? Then are you a widow?

Mrs. P. Alas, no! not so fortunate. I married a young man, my dear—an army contractor. The first six or eight months went off pleasantly enough, till Mr. Pritchards, my husband, took it into his head to enter into a contaact to supply the army of some Hospodar of some queer place, with arms. From that moment he became another creature, and I discovered, instead of having to manage a quiet, respectable man of business, that I was linked to a hybird husband—three parts dragoon, one half rifleman, with a touch of the gallant 42d in him.

Mrs. R. I love the army. I wish my husband had a millitary taste; but, by his fancy for hornpipes, he seems more inclined for the navy.

Mrs. P. Don't wish such a thing, my dear. Think of having your carpets torn with spurs—think of smoking in your drawing room. I have to endure all this, and when I expostulate with him for turning the house into a barrack room, when—what do you think?—he puts me under arrest, as he calls it, for sixteen days.

Mrs. R Under arrest?—lock you up?

Mrs. P. Yes, and puts the key in his pocket; so I've deserted, as he calls it. I am here to ask Mr. Richards if it's not possible to get a divorce or a separation.

Mrs. R. You do not suriously contemplate such a step?

Mrs. P. And why not, pray? I am sure I am miserable as I am—I can't go about telling people of my misfortunes, so let them believe I am a widow, consequently I find I have many admirers, and one in particular, a certain Mr. De Dunstanville (there's a name for you!) much better than Pritchards—he's particularly struck, and commits all sorts of extravagances.

Mrs. R. Of what description, my dear?

Mrs. P. Why, yesterday, nothing would satisfy him short of taking away my ring. You know it—the little turquoise I had at school!

Mrs. R. Indeed! And you allowed the larceny?

Mrs. P. Allowed?—he never asked my permission! But let us change the subject; I don't wish to bore you with my affairs. Are you happy?

Mrs. R. Indeed I am. Mr. Richards is everything I could wish—amiable, good-tempered, domestic—yes, very domestic. He never goes anywhere except when business obliges him, and then he stops very late; but then he has a great deal of business—what he calls an extensive practice.

Mrs. P. Here he is. (*they rise.*)

Enter Richards, *dressed.*

Mrs. R. Henry, let me introduce you to an old friend and school-fellow.

RICH. (*crosses*). I am charmed to make your acquaintance, madam. (*recognizing her—aside*) Heavens!—the widow!

MRS. P. (*recognizing him*). Mr. De Dunstanville!

MRS. R. Mr. De—who?

RICH. Mr. De—who?

MRS. P. I've certainly had the pleasure of meeting you before.

RICH. No doubt—in court, with my wig on.

MRS. P. And you certainly have had the pleasure of meeting me.

RICH. Where?

MRS. P. Where? Why, on Friday last, at Mrs. Ginger's, the dansante.

MRS. R. At Mrs. Ginger's, the dansante?

RICH. Me at Mrs. Ginger's, the dansante? I don't know such a person, and I wouldn't go to such a place.

MRS. R. The dansante—on Friday? Why, that was the night you were so late at your chambers in the cause of——

RICH. Dilberry *versus* Snaggs—of couse. Besides, my dear madam, if I had the pleasure of meeting you before, believe me it would have been a pleasure that I could never have forgotten. No, my lord—I beg pardon—I was thinking you were the judge.

MRS. P. I know who's the criminal.

MRS. R. I see how it is—Fanny must have met that person so like you.

RICH. That's it! Now isn't it dreadful—isn't it past bearing?

MRS. R. Fanny dear, there is a man going about, so like my Richards, that everybody takes him for my husband, and I am compelled to hear of all sorts of extravagance supposed to be committed by him, Mr. Richards, when the real culprit has been this person.

MRS. P. Indeed!

RICH. Fact, I assure you. I live in daily dread of his coming here some day, and my wife taking him for me—it might be very serious.

MRS. P. And so very like?

RICH. Bless you, as like as two peas!

MRS. P. Then he must have the same hair, same eyes, same voice.

RICH. There—even the voice! It's disgusting, isn't it? What did you say the fellow's name was?

MRS. P. De Dunstanville.

RICH. What a name! Now we'll dismiss the subject. You wish to consult me?

MRS. R. Respecting a contemplated separation from my husband.

RICH. Husband! Oh, then, you're not a widow?

MRS. R. My dear, what made you suppose she was?

RICH. Oh, nothing; only—only she looks like one. Well, madam, your case?

MRS. P. I'm afraid that my husband—his name is Pritchards—is not exactly right here. (*touching her forehead.*)

RICH. A case of *Lunatico Inquirendo.* Well?

MRS. P. But I've written out a statement of my position, that you might look over at your leisure, and give me your opinion. (*produces paper and hands it to* RICHARDS.)

RICH. (*taking it*). Certainly.

MRS. P. (*aside*). It is he—my turquoise ring on his very finger!

RICH. Cab's at the door.

MRS. R Cab, Henry—are you going so soon?

RICH. To my chambers, my dear. (*places the statement on table*) I have two or three attorneys to meet. (*crosses—aside*) I don't like to leave them together. (*aloud*) Give me my Talma. If you are going up to Oxford street or the Edgeware Road, I can put you down on my way to the Temple.

MRS. R. Fanny will stay a little while with me—we have a great deal to talk about.

RICH. I shall get back as soon as possible. dear. (*to* MRS. PRITCHARDS) Then you're not going my way?

MRS. P. No, sir. I should hope not.

RICH. Very well. (*aside*) I don't much like leaving them together. (*aloud*) Then I'll look over your case, certainly, on my return, and give you my opinion when I see you again. Good morning. Good by, dear.

MRS. R Good by.

MRS. P. Good morning, Mr. De Dun—I mean Richards.

RICH. Good morning. [*Exit* RICHARDS.

MRS. R. Well, Fanny, what do you think of my husband, Mr. Richards?

MRS. P. Do you care about being made unhappy?

MRS. R. I might care about it—but I think you would find some difficulty in making me so.

MRS. P. Then I shall not attempt it.

MRS. R. If you were to try, what would you do?

MRS. P. Don't ask me—as you are happy, it would be cruel to disturb your felicity.

MRS. R. Do you know of anything that could do so.

MRS. P. Perhaps I do, perhaps I don't—and prefer to remain silent

MRS. R You excite my curiosity, and then refuse to gratify it.

MRS. P. Because the gratification might destroy your peace.

MRS. R. What is it you would or could tell me?

MRS. P. Don't ask me.

MRS. R. I shall not rest till you tell me—I insist upon being made unhappy. What is it?

Mrs. P. Promise me not to be too wretched if I tell you.

Mrs. R. I won't mind it at all—well?

Mrs. P. Well—your husband——

Mrs. R. I thought it was about him.

Mrs. P. Deceives you, and has deceived me.

Mrs. R. You! In what way?

Mrs. P. He is that Mr. De Dunstanville, and passes himself off as a single man.

Mrs. R. I will not believe it.

Mrs. P. I can prove it to you.

Mrs. R. Ah! in what way?

Mrs. P. The ring that I told you M. De D. took from me, I discovered on your husband's finger.

Mrs. R. The turquoise?

Mrs. P. The very same.

Mrs. R. I won't believe it, but come to my room, Fanny—you are sure that Mr. De Dunstanville and Mr. Richards are one and the same person?

Mrs. P. Positive.

Mrs. R. Then I'll be revenged—come to my room, dear, and let us concoct a plan of vengeance; it will be hard, if we injured women cannot hit upon something to punish a delinquent husband.

A TIGER AND HIS OWN MAID.

From Charles Dance's Farce of "The Unfinished Gentleman."

CHARACTERS.

James Miller, *a Gentleman's Tiger.*
Mary Chintz, *a Lady's own Maid.*

Time—*Present period.*

Scene.—*A Drawing-room handsomely furnished with books, guitar, flowers, etc.*

Chintz *discovered looking out of a window.*

Chintz. Past three o'clock!—I know I shall be disappointed again; this is the second time my Jem will have come to take me in his master's cab to the Zoological Gardens—I'm certain I shan't be able to go—how provoking! (*looking out at window*) There's the cab, and there's my Jem!—he'll be so disappointed—I must make signs to him. (*shakes her head, etc.*) I can't come—missis hasn't come home; wait a bit—I shall get in a passion presently. Well! if he hasn't got a boy to hold the horse! He's getting out—oh, my

gracious! he has got his master's clothes on, what a shame! (*laughs*) Oh, goodness me! if he hasn't stuck a pair of *mustarchers!*—what a fright he does look! he's coming in—I must run down and send him away. (*going*) Why, hang his impudence! if he isn't coming up stairs! What will Miss Bloomfield say?

Enter JEM MILLER, *dressed in the extreme of modern fashion, with large mutaschios.*

JEM. How are you, my angelic angel? Here I am all right and regular—couldn't make out your dumb talk, so bolted up to *de*lucidate the particulars. What is the row, eh?—*explainez vouz.*

CHINTZ. Jem you ought to be ashamed of yourself, to come up here: if Miss Bloomfield were to see you, I should never hear the last of it. (*looking at him and laughing*) Where did you get those *mustarchers?*—you look just like Lord Fitznoodle.

JEM. You do me proud!—*parole d'honneur;* dem'd if you don't! Why, you see, as we were going to give master's cab a benefit, I determined to do the thing in style; so I borrowed a suit of his toggery—established a pair of *killers,* and here I am, a finished landscape of a gentleman, all ready for the Zoological Gardens.

CHINTZ (*looking at him and turning him round*). Yes, I think you are. If once you go there, you'll never get out again—you'll be put in a cage as a specimen of the *hoorang hootangs.*

JEM. Come, I say; don't you cast any *in*flections; take care you are not caught for a mermaid, or some other queer fish—but, I say, what's the matter? what did you mean by (*imitating her action*) *Comme ca?*

CHINTZ. Why, to tell you I couldn't get out: Miss Bloomfield is to be married to-morrow, and I suppose has been detained by the m lliner, about her dress. I can't go out until she returns home, so I'm afraid we shall be disappointed again.

JEM. What a dem'd bore! Exterminate the milliner! Missis going to be married, eh? Who is the *Mari*—the *enfant trouvè?* as the French say.

CHINTZ. Lord Totterly.

JEM. (*astonished*). Lord Totterly!

CHINTZ. Yes—do you know him?

JEM. Yes—that is, I have heard of him. (*aside*) What a piece of news for my master! Lord Totterly, eh?

CHINTZ. Yes, he's the bridegroom—to-morrow they are to be married.

JEM. (*aside*). The devil! (*aloud*) You don't say so.

CHINTZ. I do. But I'm sure she won't be happy, for his lordship is more than sixty years of age, and is such a silly old fool—quite valetudinarius and *hoppycondrobical.*

JEM (*musing*). You don't say so.

CHNTZ. I do. He's old enough to be her grandfather.

JEM. The more fool she, then, to marry him.

CHINTZ. Why, you see, Jem, she does it for the sake of his money.

JEM. How dem'd *platological*—how excessively *surreptitious!*

CHINTZ. His lordship is rich, and missis's father has just lost all his property by the breaking up of a bank.

JEM. Ah! a *savings* bank, I suppose. I lost two pound ten and four pence in the same way—the treasurer *evaporated.*

CHINTZ. And it is to save her father from a prison, that she is going to marry the old lord.

JEM. How *maternal!* how exquisitely *mythological!*

CHINTZ. It is, indeed, Jem; I pity her—I do, really, for I know she is breaking her heart for a young man she was promised to, in the country.

JEM. Promised to a young man in the country!—You don't say so!

CHINTZ. I do. What a dreadful thing it is to be poor!—isn't it, Jem!

JEM. Excruciating!—that's what keeps us from being *connuberal,* isn't it, Polly?

CHINTZ. It is indeed, Jem—I wish we could get a prize in the lottery, or something.

JEM. Ah, I wish we could!—then we'd get married, take a *gin* shop—I mean a wine vaults, and be respectable *licensed victuallers.* Good-by, Polly, I must go—good-by!

CHINTZ. Good-bye! What, are you going, Jem? don't you mean to take me to the Zoological Gardens?

JEM. Why you see it's very late—and master may want the cab, so I must go. (*aside*) I must tell him the news about the old gentleman. (*aloud*) Good-by, Polly—good-by—(*trying to kiss her*)—just one!

CHINTZ. No, Jem, it ain't proper.

JEM (*going*). Oh, very well.

CHINTZ. But if you insist upon it, and will take off your *mustarchers,* why——

JEM. *Certainment, oui!* (*taking off mustachios*) There now—(*kisses her*)—good-by! good-by!—we must be *licensed victuallers!* [*Exit.*

CHINTZ. What a dear fellow! I love him more and more, every time I see him. Oh, dear! what a dreadful thing it is to be obliged to keep single, when one wants to be married.

AN INVENTIVE GENIUS.

From J. R. Planche's Farce of "The Captain of the Watch."

CHARACTERS.

VISCOUNT DE LIGNY, *Captain of the Watch.*
BARON VONDERPOTTER, *a Flemish Noble.*

TIME AND PLACE—*Brussels during the reign of Louis XIV. of France.*

SCENE.—*A garden with wall at back, in which is a door opening upon the street.*

[The following scene, admirably paraphrased by Mr. Planche, from the French comedy, *Le Chevalier du Guet*, affords ample scope for the display of histrionic tact, as the characters are redolent with humor of a quiet, yet telling nature. The absurd and indomitable impudence of the Viscount is rendered the more ridiculous through the weak credulity of the Baron, who rapturously drinks in the incredible inventions of the captain, while unconsciously affording him points wherewith to render his romance plausible. To understand the scene perfectly a slight knowledge of antecedent matters is necessary. The Baron had made an excuse to his niece of having been called to visit the governor. The young lady took advantage of his absence to appoint a clandestine meeting with her lover in the garden and, for that purpose, had left the door unlocked. The Baron in reality had gone to visit a noble lady whom he admired, but was denied admission to her house. The marchioness was, at the moment of his visit, enjoying the company of the captain of the watch, who, to avoid exposure of her reputation, escaped from a second story window, when being seen by his own men took to flight in anticipation of arrest.]

The door is opened suddenly, and the CAPTAIN OF THE WATCH *enters.*

CAPTAIN. Lucky chance, a gate on the latch; 'sdeath, if they had caught me! The captain of the watch arrested *by* the watch; a pleasant anecdote for the gossips of Brussels. Ha! ha! I can't help laughing at the notion myself, upon my soul. It was almost a pity to spoil so good a joke. But, then, my office, and what's more, my salary, would be in jeopardy. Besides, the fair Marchioness! my capture might have compromised her. Who the deuce is my rival, I wonder? I should like to know the gentleman whose unexpected visit compelled me, for the lady's sake, to risk my neck by jumping from a second floor window, and my reputation by a scuffle with my own unconscious satellites. Is he a young man whose impetuous spirits she dreads, or an old one, whose wealthy purse she has designs on? I suspect the *latter*, by some hints she dropped. Young or old, however, whoever he is, his arrival was confounded malapropos. How the plague am I

to get home without discovery? my fellows are on the *qui vive* at both ends of the street. I must take my chance of lying close here till they give up the chase.

The BARON *opens the garden gate and enters, unheard by* CAPTAIN.

BARON (*aside, as he enters*). How's this? the gate on the latch? That careless Katryn, when I particularly ordered her to lock it after me! She shall hear of this, and soundly; I am just in the temper to fall foul of anybody. The Marchioness ill—gone to bed—not to be seen—provoking!

CAPT. (*aside*). Where can I have got to? The night is so dark, and I was so confoundedly hard pressed, that I'll be hanged if I know even the street. There are trees here; it must be some garden to a detached house. (*feeling about.*)

BAR. (*aside*). Eh! Don't I hear somebody moving about? (*advances and runs against* CAPTAIN) Hollo! Who's there?

CAPT. (*aside*) Zounds!

BAR. Who's there? Speak, or I'll run you through the body!

CAPT. (*aside, and drawing*). The devil you will! (*aloud*) Don't be alarmed, it's only a friend.

BAR. A friend! What friend? Whose friend?

CAPT. Everybody's, a friend of the human race. Don't make a noise.

BAR. Don't make a noise! I will make a noise, if you don't immediately declare——

CAPT. I declare I won't do anything, if you make a disturbance. I give you fair notice that my sword is drawn, and you may run against it in the dark. Just let me find the way out, and——

BAR. Out, sir! you don't budge a foot till I know who you are, and what business you have in my garden at this hour!

CAPT. In *your* garden? Adzooks! the master of the house! Ten thousand pardons, whoever you are, and accept my most grateful thanks for the protection your hospitable walls have afforded me.

BAR. Confound your politeness, sir! Answer my question, or I will call the watch; they are in the street.

CAPT. Don't think of such a thing, sir. On the contrary, as you are the master of this place, I trust to be still further indebted to your generosity.

BAR. Confound your impudence, sir! answer me directly, what seek you here?

CAPT. An asylum. I am the victim of circumstances. (*aside*) I must say something, but I'll be hanged if I know what. (*aloud*) Listen, sir, and I will confide to you the fatal secret. That is, as soon as my agitation will permit me, (*aside*) and I can think of one that will do.

BAR. Proceed, or I'll call the watch.

Capt. Sir, I beseech you to be calm—I have the strongest reasons for wishing to remain concealed.

Bar. I've no doubt.

Capt. Hear me, sir. I presume I am speaking to a man of honor.

Bar. I should be glad to presume as much on my part.

Capt. You shall be satisfied instantly. I am the youngest branch of an ancient Flemish family—my name is—(*aside*) Plague take me if I can think of a name!

Bar. Well, well.

Capt. But may I depend upon your secresy?

Bar. If you tell me directly, not else.

Capt. Well, then, my name is Cæsar de Cortenberg.

Bar. De Cortenberg!

Capt. Yes, sir. I am the last of that noble house: left alone in the world, I lived on my patrimonial estate near Tournay, retired from the world, occupied only with the care of my garden, cultivating tulips.

Bar. Rot your tulips! Tell me at once, what brought you here.

Capt. I am coming to that, sir, immediately. A letter, a fatal letter, reached me, sir, in that peaceful paradise, from my sister.

Bar. Your sister! you said you were the last of your family—left alone in the world.

Capt. (*aside*). Did I? (*aloud*) So I did, sir, and so I am, sir—the last male. My sister, sir, my only sister, had taken the veil in the Ursuline Convent, at St. Omer's, so that I was, you see, left alone in the world.

Bar. Well, well, go on.

Capt. Pardon me, sir, my emotion overcomes me. (*aside*) I'm at a dead lock, I declare! (*aloud*) Where was I?

Bar. You had a letter from your sister.

Capt. Ah! yes! That letter! that horrible letter! A wretch—a monster in the human shape—an infamous seducer, whose name respect for his noble family compels me to suppress, even to you, my benefactor. This villain, sir, had lured my unfortunate sister from her pious retreat, had carried her off to this city, and then deserted her—left her to perish—Oh, sir! allow my silent tears to flow unchecked.

Bar. Poor young man, poor young man, this is indeed a sad story!

Capt. I felt assured you would sympathize with me.

Bar. I do, I do; but I am still anxious to know——

Capt. How I came into your garden, sir—of course—it is but natural you should be—I am coming to that, sir. In the receipt of this dreadful information, sir, I immediately set off for Brussels; I arrived here this evening, and went straight to the house in which my unhappy sister had found a temporary refuge—having obtained entrance, I proceeded up stairs to her chamber—the door was fastened—I heard a stifled cry for help!—I recognized

my sister's voice—I knocked frantically at the door—nobody opened it.

BAR. But you burst it open, of course?

CAPT. Instantly. (*aside*) 'Gad, he helps me out! (*aloud*) With one blow of my foot, and rushing in—I saw!—Oh, horror—what do you think I saw, sir?

BAR. Your sister in the power of some ruffian!

CAPT. Exactly so! (*aside*) As well that, as anything else! (*aloud*) It was he, the infamous destroyer of her honor; who, fearful of exposure, threatened her with death if she did not sign a paper acquitting him of all knowledge of her flight.

BAR. The villian!—I should have run him through the body on the spot.

CAPT. Noble-minded man! you but anticipate my words—one thrust and he lay a bleeding corpse at my feet!—my sister rushed shrieking from the apartment—I followed—found myself in the street——

BAR. And then, the watch, I suppose——

CAPT. Yes, the watch, alarmed by the cry of murder, came running to the spot—I fled—they pursued. In a strange city, not knowing whither to bend my steps, I took the first turnings that presented themselves, entered this street, found a gate unfastened—and now, sir, having made this candid confession, having thrown myself upon your honor and generosity, deliver me, if you please, into the hands of justice, for having, perhaps, too rashly taken upon myself to avenge the ruin of a sister, and the dishonor of a noble family! (*aside*) Phew!

BAR. No! no, young man, you shall not repent your confidence. I have been deeply moved by your story—I pity you sincerely; and will show my sympathy in more than words—my house shall be your home while you need such an asylum.

CAPT. Generous man!

BAR. I must talk to the Governor on this business. There is considerable blame to be attached to the police—they should have been cognizant of the arrival of two strangers in this city—should have discovered immediately the situation of the parties, and rescued your sister from the grasp of a villain. If I knew the captain of the watch, I should tell him to his head, he had been guilty of gross negligence; as it is, I shall speak to the Governor and have him reprimanded—perhaps displaced.

CAPT. How very kind.

BAR. Wait here a moment. I will just reconnoitre in doors—take good heart—time works wonders—your sister may return to the convent—her name is—

CAPT. Louise de Valkenberg.

BAR. De Valkenberg? you said De Cortenberg!

CAPT. Yes! De Cortenberg de Valkenberg, etc., etc., etc.

BAR. Ah! I see! Well, just wait here, as I said, one moment,

while I see if the coast be clear. (*aside*) We can't trust women with such secrets. (*aloud*) Don't move from that spot, I'll be back directly. [*Exit, cautiously.*

Capt. Egad! the old boy swallows my story capitally. I may as well pass the night here, now, as anywhere else, and to-morrow morning, what shall I say at home? Why, give out, of course, that I spent the hours in watching over the safety of the sleeping inhabitants!

MY UNCLE'S FRIENDS.

From William Brough's Farce of "Number One Around the Corner."

CHARACTERS.

Flipper, } *Fellow Lodgers.*
Nobbler, }

Scene.—*A room in a boarding-house, moderately furnished, with two doors and a window.*

[This is an excellent specimen of broad humor. Mr. Flipper, a young man dependent upon a wealthy uncle for support, has been disappointed in receiving his usual quarterly remittance, as his uncle informs him by letter, wherein his relative likewise states that he has left his best coat with a tailor to be repaired and has ordered him to leave it at his nephew's place. In order to meet a business appointment the young gentleman, in anticipation of the payment of his allowance, has ordered a new pair of boots, for which the bootmaker demands cash. While talking with this mechanic, the lodging-house porter deposits a coat belonging to another lodger accidently in Flipper's room. This gentleman searches in vain to find money to pay for his new boots, and then hunts for something which he could pawn to raise the desired amount.]

Flipper *enters despondently.*

Flipper. No, not a thing! Everything I could spare has gone to No. 1 round the corner already. Everything always does before the quarter's up. (*sees coat*) What's that?—my uncle's coat come home, and I never noticed it! The very thing! It will only be for a day or two. Fortunately my room opens on to the back staircase—I can slip out unobserved—and yet my uncle told me to send his coat to him directly it arrived. Well, I obey. I won't send it to my uncle's. I'll do better—I'll take it myself to my uncle's at No. 1 round the corner. [*Exit.*

Nobbler (*outside*). In there? Why, young idiot, don't you know my coat yet? There, go about your business—I'll fetch it. (*knocks*) I beg your pardon. (*enters with meerschaum pipe in his mouth*) I beg

your pardon, sir; but have you seen—what! No one here? (*goes to door*) I beg your pardon, sir—but have you seen a bright blue coat with gilt buttons? No reply!—perhaps he's deaf. (*knocks and shouts*) Hi! sir, have you seen a bright blue coat with gilt buttons? It's very odd! (*opens door*) He's not here either! (*looks round*) Now where the deuce has that fool of a boy put it? It's no use—I must have it. It's not polite, I know, to intrude into other gentlemen's bedrooms; but, when it's a question of bright blue coats with gilt buttons, it's no use standing upon ceremony. Here goes! —it must be in here. (*puts pipe on mantelpiece, and exit.*)

FLIPPER *enters.*

FLIPPER. Confound the fellow! I've heard of many cruel uncle's, but I don't believe there ever was—even including the one in the Babes in the Wood—so hard-hearted a relation as that one of mine, at No. 1 round the corner. With all I could say, he would not lend a farthing more than ten shillings on that coat. That makes only fifteen shillings towards the twenty—and the boot-maker waiting in the passage! What's to be done? If I could only get him to allow me something for the old ones—they're not worth much—but perhaps he might, as I am a customer—or at least intend to be. The idea! only ten shillings on my uncle's best coat! (*throws pawnbroker's ticket indignantly on the table, and exit.*)

NOBBLER (*enters*). No, there's no bright blue coat with gilt buttons there. Oh, if I don't serve out that young rascal, Jim! Here's another room over here; perhaps he's taken it there. [*Exit.*

FLIPPER (*enters with a pair of patent leather boots*). Victory, I've done it. After no end of persuasions and promises of future patronage, I have induced the boot-maker to take the fifteen shillings and the old boots in full discharge of his bill. There, these are something like a pair of boots! I'll just brush up myself a little, and then start off to my appointment. (*puts boots on chair, exits.*)

NOBBLER (*entering*). No; that's nothing but a passage leading to the back staircase. There's no bright blue coat with gilt buttons there. Oh, Lord! how chilly I am, standing all this while without it; and I that have had such a cold for the last fortnight. (*sneezes*) Talking of that, who the deuce could it have been that put that basin of gruel and spirits of nitre at my door every night? I've questioned Jim about it—he doesn't know; and Mrs. Grampus—she won't tell. Who on earth is it that takes such a tender interest in my health? It can't be the old lady herself that has fallen in love with me—no, that's impossible! Landladies never fall in love with lodgers that don't pay! No; it must be some gentle creature —some guardian angel watching over me. And yet I didn't know we had any female lodgers in the house. (*sneezes*) Oh, Lord! I wish I could find my coat! How cold it is! How I am to keep my appointment with the Bubble Coffee-house to-day I don't know! I

can't go to meet a young man to whom I've promised £5 a week in my shirt sleeves, it isn't likely! What a capital idea that was of mine! I advertised—"Wanted, a Secretary to a newly established Joint Stock Society. Salary, £5 a week. Apply to 'X. Y. Z.' Ha, ha! I offer £5 a week! I that have n't five shillings in the world! However, one flat nibbled at the bait, and did apply to "X. X. Z." signing himself "A. B. C.;" I replied, informing him that if he was prepared to deposit £20 security (a very small sum, considering the salary—I might as well have made it £50) I would meet him to settle it at one o'clock to-day. And now I'm to be swindled out of that £20, which I had already looked upon as in my own pocket, just because I can't find a coat to go in. Hang it! It must be somewhere about here! (*sees ticket on table*) What's this? A pawn ticket? (*reads*) "A bright blue coat with gilt buttons." Good Heavens! No wonder I couldn't find it! Pawned, actually! Popped as if it were a weazel! Popped at No 1 round the corner! And by whom? (*looks at ticket*) "Mr. Flipper." So, then, my fellow lodger is in the pickpocket line, I find. (*sees* FLIPPER'S *new boots*) Hah, and a very good business he must find it, or he couldn't afford to wear such boots as these—patent leathers? A regular heavy swell mobsman! Upon my life, it's too bad—the only coat I had to wear. Eh! a good thought! why not? These are his boots. At any rate they're worth ten shillings. He popped my coat. Egad! I'll pop his boots to get it out again. Come along, my shiney friends! We shan't be long; we're only going—round the corner. [*Exit.*

FLIPPER (*entering*). Now that's all right. I've taking more than ordinary pains to make myself look respectable. I know they are so paticular in these responsible offices. I think I shall do, at least with the addition of the boots, which I contrived to get so nicely. Nothing sets a man off so well as a good pair of boots. Eh! what a confounded smell of tobacco! Surely no one has been smoking in my room. (*sees pipe*) Well, now, upon my word, that's cool! That young scoundrel, Jim, has been here with his filthy pipe. A meerschaum, too! The young gentleman does it in style. There, that will put his pipe out, I think. (*throws it out of window*) Now, I'll just have some breakfast. No I won't, I'll try the boots on first and see how they fit me. I hope the fellow hasn't made them too big—I do hate big boots. Eh! why! what the devil! I could have sworn I put them here—(*looks round.*)

NOBBLER (*outside*). Was there ever such a swindle! (*entering*) I'm twopence short.

FLIPPER. Sir, may I inquire——

NOBBLER. Oh, you're there, are you? Well, sir, I tell you I am twopence short.

FLIPPER. Will you allow me to ask——

NOBBLER. Certainly not, sir. Give me the other twopence or I shall instantly give you into custody.

L. of C.

FLIPPER. What do you mean, fellow?

NOBBLER. Twopence more, or up comes the policeman.

FLIPPER. Will you leave the room, sir?

NOBBLER. No, misguided young man, I will not leave the room—at any rate till I get the twopence.

FLIPPER. Then, sir, I shall kick you out. (*aside*) At least, I would if I could find my boots. (*aloud*) What do you want?

NOBBLER. Twopence, I tell you. Listen; I went to No. 1 round the corner—you know the place—I need not describe it further. I threw my boots upon the counter.

FLIPPER. Your boots! what boots?

NOBBLER. Well, when I say my boots, of course, I mean *your* boots.

FLIPPER (*collaring him*). Scoundrel, you have pawned my boots!

NOBBLER. Why, of course I have. Didn't you pawn my coat?

FLIPPER. *Your* coat? no.

NOBBLER. No! come, you know that won't do anyhow. I found the ticket here myself, "bright blue coat, gilt buttons."

FLIPPER. What! was that *your* coat?

NOBRLER. Oh, you didn't know it, of course—thought it was your own, no doubt. A very natural mistake, wasn't it?

FLIPPER. Sir, I solemnly protest to you——

NOBBLER. There, don't make it worse by trying to deny it. A fine young man like you just commencing life—oh, it's too bad! Why didn't you come to me like a man and say—"My good friend, I am short of cash—will you lend me ten shillings?" instead of turning thief and pawning a fellow's coat. To be sure, if you had done so, I should not have lent it you; but then how much quieter would be your own conscience!

FLIPPER. But when I tell you——

NOBBLER. What's the use in telling me, when I tell you I must have the other twopence.

FLIPPER. What other twopence?

NOBBLER. Why, when I threw my boots—that is, your boots—no they *are* my boots; for didn't I take them in execution for the coat you stole?

FLIPPER. Sir!

NOBBELR. Well, then, we'll say *the* boots—I threw them on the counter. "Ten shillings," says I. "What?" says our friend at No. 1. "Ten shillings," says I again. "You must be strangely ignorant of the value of these articles," says he. "Not at all," says I. "I'll lend you five," says he. "Won't do," says I. "Seven," says he. "Ten," says I, and after a deal of bother he consented. He handed me the ticket, and I told him I didn't want the money, but I'd take a bright blue coat with gilt buttons, pawned this morning for ten shillings, instead. "Very well, twopence more," says he. "Twopence for what?" says I. "For the ticket and the interest," says he. "But I haven't got twopence," says I. "Then

you can't have the coat," says he. "Then give me back the boots," says I; I'll try them somewhere else." "But there's the ticket and the interest for them!" says he.

FLIPPER. What, then you got neither?

NOBBLER. Why, how could I get them when I hadn't got the twopence?

FLIPPER. Confound it, sir, you have made me neglect a most important appointment—you have pawned the only pair of boots I had to wear.

NOBBLER. And you, sir, by stealing the only coat I have in the world, have been the cause of my missing an interview of the utmost consequence.

FLIPPER. What do you propose, sir?

NOBBLER. Why, that you should instantly furnish me with twopence, and so enable me to get my coat back.

FLIPPER. And where the devil am I to get the ridiculous sum you name?

NOBBLER. Where? Didn't you get ten shillings on the coat you so infamously appropriated?

FLIPPER. To be sure I did, and immediately paid it away for the boots you so feloniously abstracted.

NOBBLER. Then you have no money?

FLIPPER. Not a farthing.

NOBBLER. Nor anything else you could take to No. 1?

FLIPPER. Nothing.

NOBBLER. The devil!—stop, though, I have it. My pipe! It's silver mounted. At least they'll lend me sixpence upon it. (*looks for it.*)

FLIPPER (*aside*). His pipe!

NOBBLER. Gone! Mr. Flipper, I placed a silver mounted meerschaum on this mantelpiece——

FLIPPER. How dare you smoke in my room, sir?

NOBBLER. The pipe I say—where is it?

FLIPPER. Well, if I must tell you, finding it in my room, and not knowing it was yours, I——

NOBBLER. Of course you did—sent it to No. 1, with my coat. Is there anything else of mine you would like?

FLIPPER. Sir, these insinuations! I tell you I threw your filthy pipe out of the window.

NOBBLER. Of course you expect I'll swallow that?

FLIPPER. And, sir, unless you instantly quit this apartment, I shall throw you after it.

NOBBLER. In which case, I should probably fall foul of a policeman, and should give you into custody.

FLIPPER. Confound it, sir, will nothing satisfy you——

NOBBLER. Satisfy me, certainly! I am easily satisfied. I only ask for twopence to get my coat again.

FLIPPER. Enough, sir, you shall have it, though I descend so low as to borrow of the landlady.

NOBBLER. Oh, descend by all means, you'll find her down below.

FLIPPER. Yes, sir, I will go down stairs—I would take *any* steps in order to be rid of you. [*Exit.*

NOBBLER. Egad! a very pleasant fellow-lodger I have got! I wonder if he's got any more of those interesting little documents relating to stolen property. (*takes up bill from table*) What's this? His lodging bill—not paid, of course. And a nice little sum it mounts up to. Poor Mrs. Grampus! I'll just inform her what kind of a lodger she has got. Perhaps she'll be more indulgent with my little bill, and even now she is doubtless being further victimized. The miscreant left this place to borrow money of her! I will instantly warn her. No I won't; I'll wait till he gets the twopence, or I shan't get my coat. But after that, it shall never be said that I screened a robber. What the deuce could the fellow have had, to run up such a bill as this? (*reads*) "Dec. 20th: Breakfast, dinner, gruel and sweet spirits of nitre." Gruel eh? He's had a cold, too. "21st, Gruel," again: a *bad* cold, evidently. "22d, Gruel and nitre for Mr. Nobbler." What's that? "23d, Gruel for Mr. Nobbler as before. 24th—25th "—every day the same entry, "Gruel and nitre for Mr. Nobbler." Is it possible? 'twas he, this felon, this illegal pawner, this purloiner of bright blue coats with gilt buttons, —was the guardian angel that every night brought that gruel to the sick man's door. Generous criminal! Your heart is in the right place, although your fingers are so often in the wrong person's pockets. He cannot be wholly lost to virtue. Might not my eloquence even yet recall him to the paths of rectitude, and so repay him for his magnanimous basins of gruel? I'll try. He comes. Unhappy man!

Enter FLIPPER.

FLIPPER. I am really the most unfortunate fellow in the world.

NOBBLER. You are indeed. But may we not still hope. Stop, by the bye, have you got the twopence?

FLIPPER. Twopence, no; how the devil should I get it?

NOBBLER. If as a first step you would only leave off bad language. But Mrs. Grampus——

FLIPPER. Gone out, and won't be back till evening. I even degraded myself so far as to ask Jem, the shoe boy, for the sum, but he hadn't got a farthing. So I suppose I must be bored with you all day.

NOBBLER. No, don't say bored; I am your best friend.

FLIPPER. Well, you have a queer way of showing your friendship, at any rate.

NOBBLER. How could I be otherwise? Are you not my benefactor—my guardian genius?

FLIPPER. How ridiculous you are talking; just now I ruined you,

NOBBLER. And so you have. But shall that destroy my gratitude. Oh, most magnanimous of pickpockets, did you not, when I was lying on a bed of sickness, come to my door each night and pour balm into my wounded heart in the form of eleemosynary gruel? (*embracing him.*)

FLIPPER (*shaking him off*). Balm, indeed! Go to the devil with your gratitude. I only tried to stop your infernal cough, that hindered me from sleeping.

NOBBLER. No; you make light of the benefits you have conferred upon me—true test of nobleness! Oh, if you would but reflect upon your situation!

FLIPPRR. Reflect! I've thought of nothing but my situation since you've made me lose all hopes of it, by walking off with my only pair of boots.

NOBBLER. What! were you about to seek employment—about to obtain an honest mode of living?

FLIPPER. Don't I tell you I was going to get a situation.

NOBBLER. And shall it be said that I was the ruin of my benefactor—that I blighted the future prospects of the man who furnished me with gruel! Never! My friend, fear not, you shall have a pair of boots at any sacrifice. (*rushes out.*)

FLIPPER. Well, he's a rum one, I must say; and yet I rather like the fellow. The idea of all this gratitude for a few pints of gruel—only administered in self-defence, too. I wonder whether he will get a pair of boots and so enable me to keep my appointment. But he, poor devil, seems also in a fix through me. Egad, I wish I could find him a coat!

INCURABLE BLUES.

From Tom Taylor's Farce of "A Blighted Being."

CHARACTERS.

NED SPANKER, *a Naval Surgeon.*
JOB WORT, *a Misanthrope.*

SCENE.—*A room in a coast-side hotel. Two windows painted in flat. Door on each side. Table, chairs, pen, ink, paper, etc., and a newspaper on it.*

[In the following scene, taken from Tom Taylor's farce of "A Blighted Being," which is in itself a clever adaptation of a witty French vaudeville—*Une Existence Decolorce*—we have the antithesis of human character. Ned Spanker is a bold, frank-hearted son of the sea, who looks upon the bright side of the future and who has struggled manfully and cheerfully through adversity. Job Wort, on the other hand, although of a natural cheerful disposition, has surrendered his prospects of prosperity to the gratifacation of a self-created morbid sentimentalism.]

SPANKER *discovered standing alone.*

SPANKER (*goes up to table and sits, looking at paper*). Holloa! here's the last news from the Baltic! Confound those *Rooshians!* won't come out of their holes, and have a stand up fight, like men.

Enter JOB WORT.

JOB (*sighs*). It's too bad! The attorneys are like all the rest of the species—can't comprehend moral sufferings—aint up to

"The stinging of a heart the world has stung."

I've tried to make that hard headed lawyer understand my position as a wretch. He charges me 6s. 8d. as a client. When I painted my sufferings as a human being, he asked me if I tried "Gregory's powder!" Disgusting!

SPAN. (*looking up from paper*). Eh! I know that voice! Why——yes—of course it is—the very man—Job! (*rises and comes forward.*)

JOB. Who is it that addresses me by that detested monosyllable?

SPAN. Why, Job Wort, don't you remember Ned Spanker?

JOB. (*starts, examines his face, then shakes his hands*). My mind has been the abode of such misery since I heard that name——

SPAN. Your old chum in Gower-street, man—when you were digging up Latin roots at the college, and I was studying anatomy.

JOB. Ah! that was eight years ago. A waste of wretchedness lies between then and now; but I remember your being plucked, and how drunk we got together on that melancholy occasion.

SPAN. What a spree we had that night!

JOB. And what a headache I had the next morning!

SPAN. But what the deuce has come over you? You were a jolly fellow enough in those days.

JOB. Yes, life smiled upon me then—I had not tasted the fruits of the Dead Sea, and found them ashes on my lips!—I have lived on those fruits ever since.

SPAN. Uncommon dry eating, I should think! But what have you been about since we parted? I—to try my fortune as a surgeon on board an emigrant ship—and you——

JOB. To enter my uncle's brewery, at Little Pedlington, as a clerk, with the prospect of a partnership—Ha! ha! ha! I a clerk in a provincial brewery, with my literary aspirations—my deep susceptibilities! Oh! how bitter was the bread I earned—how bitter was the beer I brewed!

SPAN. Well, that's a recomendation for the India trade, you know.

JOB. I allude to its moral bitterness. Speaking as a brewer, I believe it was insipid. My uncle soon found out that I was not worth my salt, as he coarsely expressed it, and I cut Little Pedlington and the mash tub for London and literature.

SPAN. I should have stuck to the tap.

JOB. I dare say you would. (*crosses*) But I felt within me thoughts that "the world," I fancied, "would not willingly let die," and I determined to give them to the world. Sir, the world wouldn't have 'em—that is, the block-head editors and the sordid publishers would not give me a rap for the verses that flowed from me like a lava flood, hot from the volcano of the heart.

SPAN. Perhaps they were afraid it might set the shop on fire. Paper's a very combustible cargo.

JOB. Luckily I had enough to live upon without their aid, so I determined to be my own publisher. I brought out my antediluvian epic in sixteen books. It fell dead from the press.

SPAN. I hope it didn't hurt anybody.

JOB. Sir, if my sufferings are to be made the subject of coarse jokes, I will not trouble you with them further. I thought I had found a friend. It is one more added to the catalogue of deceptions. (*crosses behind* SPANKER.)

SPAN. No, no, old fellow. I feel for you—indeed I do. Heave ahead!

JOB. I tried the stage. Ha! ha! ha! Poor fool that I was—I tried the stage, sir!

SPAN. And was damn'd—eh?

JOB. No, sir, I wasn't damn'd. The low hirelings who have the ears of the idiotic managers nowadays, took good care that my tragedies should not find their way to the public. My works were returned, sir, as unsuitable—and so they were unsuitable, sir—I'm proud of it!

SPAN. That's right! keep your pecker up, old boy, whatever you do.

JOB And then I felt that the brand of Cain was upon me—that I was one of the world's accursed—and ever since that time I have dragged my load of misery about the various watering places of the United Kingdom—a Blighted Being!—awaiting with anxiety the time when I shall "shuffle off this mortal coil."

SPAN. Have you travelled much by rail?

JOB. Yes, by excursion trains—but no accident ever happens to the trains I go by. (*crosses.*)

SPAN. That's extraordinary! you should try a trip in one of our steamers But what are you doing in this out of the way place?

JOB What I do everywhere—suffering—waiting and wooing the annihilation that will not come to me. My uncle died a year ago.

SPAN And left you something, I hope?

JOB Not a rap! His fortune went to his wife—unless she married again—when it reverts to me.

SPAN. I'm afraid that's a bad look out.

JOB. My man of business in London thought there was a flaw in the will, I consulted the attorney here, this morning, about it—

but he says it's all right—so there's £800 a year gone—that I once looked forward to—another deception!

SPAN. But you said you'd something of your own?

JOB. I had—but what with the expenses of my epic—and some railway transactions—that's pretty well gone.

SPAN. What! you've been speculating?

JOB. In the restless search after excitement, I did dabble a little in shares. I got my excitement—but I lost my money. I've a hundred pounds left—and that spent—I shall be a beggar.

SPAN. And what do you mean to do then?

JOB. Do! Ha! ha! Chalk a mackerel on the pavement and sit by it in gloomy meditation!

SPAN. And what will you turn to then?

JOB. Ah! What! Ha, ha, ha! When a man believes in nothing—succeeds in nothing—looks forward to nothing—and has got nothing—what is there to look forward to—but one thing? (*crosses*)

SPAN. The bench.

JOB (*sits at table*). The grave!

SPAN. (*getting to* JOB, *in front of him*). I say, old fellow, I'm a doctor. I've practised in hot climates. I've seen the infernal tricks bile plays with the constitution.

JOB. Bile!

SPAN. Let me prescribe for you.

JOB. Poison?

SPAN. No—blue pill—two grains a day—mutton chop at breakfast—a swinging walk—a light dinner—two glasses of old sherry—no supper—and early hours. Follow my regimen, and I'll set you right as a trivet in a couple of months.

JOB. Oh! this is bitter! the friend in whose bosom I have shed my flood of anguish, proposes to me a mutton chop and blue pill. Oh, man! man! Can you trifle thus with a misery like mine?

A MISER RECLAIMED.

From J. R. Planche's Comedy of "Grist to the Mill."

CHARACTERS.

THE MARQUIS OF RICHEVILLE, *a Miser.*
FRANCINE, *a Miller.*
PAGE.

TIME—*Period of Louis XV.*

SCENE.—*A hall in the chateau of the Marquis, old and dirty, with delapidated furniture.*

[The Marquis de Richeville, one of the wealthiest noblemen in France, is a miserable, penurious, and selfish man, oppressing the poor, while allowing his numerous estates to fall into ruin and decay. The noble, having no heirs save a nephew, whom he has disowned on account of his sister's marrying a brewer, a good and handsome man, the Vidame of Poitiers, an ex-captain of musketeers, endeavors to entrap the Marquis into a marriage with his sister, Mlle. de Merluchet, a poverty-stricken virgin of fifty, with the aim of obtaining the control of Richeville's immense property. For that purpose the Vidame has contrived to cause his sister and the Marquis to be surprised by witnesses under such circumstances as to render marriage indispensable in the eyes of honorable men. The Marquis having solicited the governorship of the province and other honors, the Prince de Conti is dispatched by the king to inquire into his capabilities and way of life. Upon his arrival the prince is disgusted with the Marquis' manners and cupidity. To make matters worse, the Vidame and his sister lay their case before the prince with such success that he commands the Marquis to sign the marriage contract that evening, otherwise, on the morrow, he would be a prisoner in the castle of Pignerol. The Marquis is, however, relieved from this degredation through the timely arrival of a young and handsome lady, who boldly announces herself to be the Marchioness of Richeville. She is in reality Francine, a cousin, on his father's side, of the disinherited nephew of the marquis and the widow of a soldier, who, after the death of her father, continued his business as a miller. Learning of the conspiracy against the Marquis' wealth and her cousin's expectation, Francine, borrowing a handsome travelling dress from a lady at the village inn, makes her appearance and completely frustrates the mercenary designs of the ex-musketeer. Moreover, her youth, beauty, intelligence and decision of character inspires the prince with such an admiration that he pardons all the short comings of the Marquis, who, however, is ignorant as to the identity of his guardian angel. The page should be a withered up, middle-aged, half-starved man, in seedy apparel, in order to give full effect to his appearance on the scene.]

Enter MARQUIS.

MARQUIS. I'm in a dream! certainly I must be in a dream. The prince has changed his tone altogether; to me he is most gracious, most friendly, and has actually hinted that I may calculate upon the king's favorable consideration of my request; it's all owing to that lady who pretends to be my wife; there can be no doubt of that. The prince admits that her account of me has given him great satisfaction. Who, in the name of wonder, can she be? and what object can she have in thus coming to my rescue both from the anger of the prince and the machinations of that cursed vidame, and his Gorgon of a sister. I have never seen the lady before. I am certain I could not have forgotten such a charming creature—for she is a *very* charming creature. The prince allows that; he complimented me exceedingly on my good taste, and was very curious to know who she was before she be-

came Marchioness de Richeville. Egad, so am I; but I didn't know how to answer him. It was fortunate that at that moment he suddenly remembered he had a dispatch to write. I've made my escape, and must endeavor to come to an explanation with this soi-distant wife of mine, if she has not vanished in a whirlwind!

Enter FRANCINE.

Ah! you are here, madam! I was just wishing to see you.

FRANCINE. And I come at a wish, you see—impossible to have a more attentive wife.

MAR. Ay, ay, ay; that's all very well; but at last we are alone, madam.

FRAN. A tete-a-tete—how delightful!

MAR. That's as it may be. There is nobody to overhear us, and I must request you to tell me directly who you are.

FRAN. Guess.

MAR. Guess! Impossible! I've turned my brain guessing—so tell me your real name immmediately.

FRAN. No.

MAR. You refuse?

FRAN. Positively.

MAR. But you'll tell me——

FRAN. Nothing.

MAR. The deuce—well—but—but harkye, madam: suppose I don't choose to carry on this farce; you are aware there is considerable danger in imposing upon his royal highness, and one word from me——

FRAN. Say it.

MAR. Say it! do you know what will happen to you if I do say it?

FRAN. No; but I know what will happen to *you*.

MAR. Eh?

FRAN. The prince will return to his first impressions, and find you to be a miserly, narrow-minded, hard-hearted man, whose penurious habits have made him look an old shrivelled up pantaloon of sixty, instead of a well-favored nobleman of five-and-forty; and whose name, instead of being the pride of the whole country, is a byword for scorn and detestation among his own tenants.

MAR. Madam! madam!

FRAN. I haven't half done yet. The prince will find out *this*, and consequently prevent your obtaining whatever it is you desire, whilst Mlle. de Merluchet——

MAR. Ah!

FRAN. Who is now at the hall door, with the vidame, finding the only bar to their project removed, will press their suits again upon his royal highness, who, too happy to revenge himself on you for assisting in his deception, will——

MAR. Enough, enough——

FRAN. I should think so; but people's tastes differ; so farewell. If you please you have no wife—I dropped from the clouds, and I am gone in a——

MAR. No, no; stay, I entreat—you say Mlle. de Merluchet is at the hall door?

FRAN. She and the vidame were on the steps as I passed through the gallery.

MAR. Fiends! Confound them!

FRAN. *I'll* confound them if you leave them to me, and save the fiends the trouble; but if you insist——

MAR. I insist on nothing; do whatever you please; say whatever you like; only save me from that woman—and obtain me what I request from his majesty.

FRAN. Then I am your wife——

MAR. You are; that is, as far as——

FRAN. As far as *I* please: no farther. All you have to do is to sanction any act of mine, as Marchioness de Richeville.

MAR. (*hesitatingly*). Ye—yes; but you won't——

FRAN. Don't be alarmed. I will do nothing but what you *ought* to do—nothing that should cause you a moment's repentance. I am sorry to say there is no difficulty in a woman's being the better half of such a man as *you* are, or rather as you have made yourself.

MAR. Madam, madam——

FRAN. O, what I *do* tell you will be the truth, depend upon it; and now, the first thing I have to propose to you is a good action.

MAR. A good action! How much will it cost?

FRAN. A trifle to you. I wish to draw upon your good nature more than your banker.

MAR In that case, what is it?

FRAN. Marquis, you have, or I may say *we* have, a nephew.

MAR. A nephew!—(*aside*) O, the devil!

FRAN. The son of a sister, who, being ten years older than yourself, did not think it necessary to consult you in the choice of a husband.

MAR. And so degraded herself by marrying——

FRAN. An honest man, whose son, now two-and-twenty—a very nice young fellow—is a cornet of calvary, and most desirous of being on good terms with his uncle.

MAR. I'll have nothing to say to him: he's no nephew of mine. I've turned him out of every house I own in the kingdom.

FRAN. And now you'll send for him to this.

MAR. Never!

FRAN. Yes, you will Think again, he's a very fine young man, and only wants your consent to marry a young lady of good family and some fortune—the daughter of a general officer.

MAR. He may marry any body he likes; but I'll never acknowledge him, or set my eyes on him, if I can help it.

FRAN. Yes, you will——

MAR. Never! never! never!

FRAN. Very well, then; I'll ring the bell——

MAR. Ring the bell! What for? (*crosses.*)

FRAN. To desire the page to say you will be happy to see Mlle. de Merluchet.

MAR. No, no; not for the world.

FRAN. You must see one or the other—your nephew or Mlle. de Merluchet.

MAR. (*aside*). She'll drive me mad! What shall I do? (*aloud*) Well, of the two, if I must, I'll—I'll see the fellow.

FRAN. And acknowledge him——

MAR. Perhaps, if he behaves himself, some day or another.

FRAN. Unconditionally, and as soon as he arrives.

MAR. Ah, well, well! When he arrives we shall see. (*aside*) Thank Heaven, he's at Versailles with his regiment. It may be some days—anything to gain time. (*aloud*) But you must fulfill your part of the bargain.

FRAN. Of course. O, don't fear me! I'll make you a capital wife, and do you a great deal more good than you dream of. I'll transform you—remodel you—renovate you. You shall be respected, loved, adored. Fancy that—adored! What a novelty it will be to you!

MAR. I'm afraid it will be a very expensive novelty.

FRAN. You'll find it cheap at the price.

MAR. Not if it ruins me.

FRAN. Very well. You prefer being ruined by the De Merluchets——

MAR. No, no. For mercy's sake, don't ring.

FRAN. Surrender, then, unconditionally, or nothing stops me—nothing.

MAR. I do, I do. (*she rings the bell*) I tell you I do. What d'ye ring for?

Enter PAGE.

FRAN. Don't be alarmed. (*to* PAGE) You will inform the household that the Marquis de Richeville, in honor of his royal highness's arrival, has commanded that an ox should be killed and roasted in the park, and wine served out of his cellars to every person who chooses to partake of it.

MAR. (*aside*). But——

FRAN. (*aside*). Be quiet. (*to* PAGE) Do you hear me, sir?

PAGE (*astonished*). Ye—yes, madam.

FRAN. And tell the servants that they shall have new liveries as soon as they can be made, and that he doubles all their wages.

MAR. (*aside*). Doubles! Hold!

FRAN. (*aside*). Hold your tongue. (*to* PAGE) D'ye hear me, sir?

PAGE (*still more astonished*). Ye—yes, madam.

FRAN. What are your wages?

PAGE. I humbly beg your pardon, madam; but I have no wages.

FRAN. Never mind: he'll double them. Tell the steward to distribute a thousand francs amongst the poor of the village.

PAGE. Yes, madam.

MAR. (*aside*). But, 'sdeath!

FRAN. You'll be adored!

MAR. But I don't want——

FRAN. (*to* PAGE). And to bring five hundred louis-d'ors to the Marquis, for his casual expenses.

MAR. No, no, no.

FRAN. (*aside*). You'll be respected.

MAR. But I don't care. (*rises*)

FRAN. O, very well! (*to* PAGE) Go to Mademoiselle de Merluchet, and say the Marquis——

MAR. (*aside*). No, no; I am satisfied. I will be adored—respected.

FRAN. And say the Marquis is not at home.

PAGE. Yes, madam. Long live the Marquis de Richeville!

[*Exit.*

FRAN. D'ye hear, Marquis? The poor fellow has hardly got strength to say so; but I'll fatten him up, and you, too, before I've done with you.

MAR. But I don't wish——

FRAN. But I do. I can't have such a lean scarecrow of a husband as this is. Go, my dear Marquis, directly, put on the very best coat you have in your wardrobe. I know you've got clothes, though you won't wear them. Make yourself handsome for your little wife's sake. Won't you, love?

MAR. She's a beautiful woman. (*aside*) It's impossible to say no to her. (*aloud*) I will put on another coat.

FRAN. The handsomest you have mind.

MAR. The handsomest I have.

A FRACTION OF A WOMAN.

From Thomas Haynes Bailey's Farce of "Perfection."

CHARACTERS.

CHARLES PARAGON, *a London Gentleman.*
KATE O'BRIEN, *an Irish Heiress.*
SUSAN, *her Lady's Maid.*
JOHN, *a Servant.*

TIME—*The present day.*

SCENE.—KATE O'BRIEN'S *boudoir, handsomely furnished. Folding doors at the back. A table with rubber rollers and a handsome couch upon which lies an elegant shawl. Chairs, etc.*

[This very effective scene requires delicate handling from Charles and Kate, and, if neatly done, affords one of the most pleasant specimens of quiet humor of the modern stage. Sir Lawrence Paragon, having been not over fastidious, during his younger days, in the choice of a wife, desires his nephew and heir to avoid his matrimonial error through wedding Kate O'Brien, his ward, the daughter of an old friend. But Charles Paragon refuses to marry any lady unless she be all perfection. The fair one to become his wife must have a faultless face, a faultless mind; she must be beautiful without vanity; graceful without conceit; retiring without *mauraise honte;* talented without display; agreeable without coquetry; amiable without sentimentality; liberal without ostentation; animated without frivolity. Although his uncle assures him that Miss O'Brien possesses neither of these qualifications, the young man resolves upon visiting the lady in order to judge for himself, whereupon the following scene occurs.]

KATE *discovered.*

KATE. Heigho! why was I born an heiress? envied by my own sex, perpetually teased by the men, and knowing but too well, that I am sought only for my gold. Of one thing I am resolved: I never will marry till I have good reason to know that I am loved for myself alone.

Enter SUSAN.

SUSAN. A note, madam—no answer, the young man said. A very nice, genteel-looking young man he was, too——

KATE. You think of nothing, Susan, but nice young men. Go about your business.

SUSAN. Well, I'm sure, there's no harm in that. He was a very nice young man, that I will maintain.

[*Exit through the folding doors.*

KATE (*after reading the note*). From my good guardian, Sir Lawrence Paragon; and to inform me, as I am to expect a visit from his nephew, he hopes I will appear to the best advantage. I suppose, all my graces now, and none of my airs. (*reads*) "You have only to exert the fascinations you possess, to win his heart, and make me your affectionate uncle."—Thankye kindly, sir—I fear your partiality blinds you. But what shall I do with the nephew? "The woman he marries must be perfection." If he resembles Sir Lawrence, I'm sure to like him; and, if so, I may be tempted to try and win him; but it shall be without displaying one of the perfections which he has declared to be indispensable. He thinks to take me by surprise; but he shall not find me without a plot.

Enter SUSAN.

Susan! (*knock without.*)

SUSAN. Yes, ma'am—(*aside*) There is a young gentleman knocking at the door—a very nice looking gentleman—but I don't dare say so.

KATE. Wheel that sofa there. Now for the table. (SUSAN *wheels table to the front, on which lies a nosegay and a portfolio.* KATE *throws herself on sofa*) Now, unfold my shawl. There, throw it over my feet. Make haste. Now leave me.

SUSAN. What can she be about? I think she is out of her lunacies. [*Exit.*

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. Mr. Paragon, madam, is below.

KATE. Show him in. (SERVANT *shows in* CHARLES, *and exits.*)

CHARLES. Madam, my uncle, Sir Lawrence, being prevented calling on you, as he intended, I am obliged to introduce myself. (*aside*) She is exceedingly pretty.

KATE. You will excuse my not rising to receive you, sir. Pray sit down. I am very happy—I am very happy to see you. The nephew of my father's old friend must always be welcome here.

CHAS. (*aside*). Come, there's no brogue, however. Her manner is enchanting. Madam, you are very kind. I am afraid I've called at an unseasonable hour; I have disturbed you; you are reposing—perhaps you were sleeping—possibly dreaming. (*aside*) I wonder she doesn't get up.

KATE. No, sir! you could not have called more opportunely. I have been looking over this endless portfolio of drawings.

CHAS. Drawings! are you fond of the art?

KATE. Excessively! I could look at them for ever.

CHAS. (*aside*). Accomplished creature! I always said, that when I did fall in love, it would be at first sight; and I do believe my time is come at last.

KATE. What a delightful art painting is! to be able to perpetuate the features of those who are dear to us.

CHAS. Charming!

KATE. Or to treasure up some remembrances of scenes in which we have been happy, but which we may never look upon again.

CHAS. Delightful!

KATE. Or to copy the classical groups of antiquity, or form new combinations of graceful, lovely figures.

CHAS. Oh! your enthusiasm quite enchants me.

KATE Oh! you are an enthusiast, also?

CHAS. Oh, prodigiously! Pray, my dear madam, allow me to feast my eyes upon some of your drawings. (*aside*) Angelic creature!

KATE. Sir—sir, what did you say?

CHAS. Permit me to see one of your performances.

KATE. I regret to say, I never had the least idea of drawing; my houses, my trees, and my cattle are all one confused jumble of scratches.

CHAS. Not draw?

KATE. No—do you?

CHAS. I? Oh, no! But I quite misunderstood you. I thought —(*aside*) Dear me; what a pity such a sweet creature should lack such a resource, such an accomplishment!

KATE. Is anything the matter, sir?

CHAS. Oh, nothing. (*aside*) After all, it is but one. I've no doubt she has all the rest.

KATE. Did you speak?

CHAS. I was saying, I never heard so musical a voice.

KATE Oh, you flatter me. You mention music—do you not doat on it?

CHAS. Ah! there we do agree. The woman who sings!

KATE Yes, sir.

CHAS. The woman who plays!

KATE. Yes, sir.

CHAS. The woman who does both well, is a divinity. You are an enthusiast in your love of music. I see you are.

KATE. I am, sir: music is my passion! music in the morning; music in the evening; music at the silent hour of night; music on the water——

CHAS. What a woman she is!

KATE. Music at any hour.

CHAS. Yes, or on any instrument.

KATE. Oh, yes; from the magnificent organ, to the gentle lute.

CHAS. Delicious!

KATE. Or a voice—better than all, a soul-enchanting voice.

CHAS. (*aside*). There is no resisting her. (*aloud*) Oh, madam, sing.

KATE. Alas, sir! how shall I make the sad confession—much as I love music I can only listen.

CHAS. What?

KATE. I have not a singing note in my voice; and no one could ever teach me to play.

CHAS. (*aside*). Was there ever such an impostor! (*aloud*) Madam, you positively astonish me.

KATE How so, sir—can you sing?

CHAS. Oh, no; men are not expected to acquire those accomplishments; but a woman—that is—I—I——

KATE I know, sir: you were going to say, that a *woman* without them is little better than a *brute*.

CHAS. Madam, how can you suppose——

KATE Ay, sir, and I perfectly agree with you—but, sir, 'tis my misfortune, and not my fault.

CHAS. (*aside*). What a pensive tone of voice, and what a countenance! there can be no humbug there. Spite of all her lamentable deficiencies, I am fascinated.

KATE. My fate is an unhappy one—I am an orphan, as you know, and of course, laboring under such defects, I never mean to marry.

CHAS. Never mean to marry?

KATE. Never!

CHAS. Oh, madam, in mercy to mankind, make not so rash, so inconsiderate a resolve.

KATE. Sir, it is in mercy to mankind I make it. What would be a fond husband's sufferings, were he to see the wife of his bosom sinking under the degrading consciousness that she was unworthy of him?

CHAS. Unworthy!

KATE. Would he not cast her from him! Yes, yes, he would do so—I must live on unloved.

CHAS. (*aside*). By Jove! she is irresistible! (*aloud*) Madam, I adore you—listen to me; oh, listen and smile on me—hear me: I love you—oh! love me, pray do! (*kneels.*)

KATE. Sir, this is so unlooked-for, so unexpected.

CHAS. Nay, do not frown upon me; allow me to hope.

KATE. Rise, sir; you may hope—but the suprise, the agitation—pray ring that bell.

CHAS. (*aside*). She's going to faint. (*rings bell.*)

KATE. So, then, I must retire. My maid shall return, and speak a few words to you; and then, after having seen your uncle, you may visit me again.

Enter SUSAN.

Come here, Susan. (*whispers to her.*)

SUSAN. La, madam, is it possible?

KATE. Obey me instantly. Call the servant.

SUSAN. John, come here, instantly.

Enter JOHN.

CHAS. (*aside*). What on earth does she want? Why don't she get up?

KATE. Now, Susan, open the doors. John, wheel the sofa into the other room. Adieu, sir; my maid shall return immediately.

[*She is wheeled into the next room, and the door closes.*

CHAS. Well, positively, that is the laziest proceeding I ever witnessed. By-the-by, 'twas all my fault. I suppose she was too faint to move. Oh, here comes the maid.

Enter SUSAN.

SUSAN (*aside*). Well, mistress is mad, that's certain; but I must do as I'm bid.

CHAS. How is your mistress? She is a charming creature. What a happy girl you are—what a sweet mistress you have got!

SUSAN. She *is* charming—poor thing!

CHAS. Poor thing! what do you mean by poor thing?

SUSAN. Oh, it's very sad.

CHAS. What is sad?

SUSAN. You saw my mistress whisper to me?

CHAS. Yes, to be sure! but there's nothing so sad in a whisper.

SUSAN. Indeed, but there is, though. She desired me to reveal the affair to you; she had not the courage to tell you herself. To be sure, you must have known it, sooner or later.

CHAS. What do you mean? You frighten me out of my wits.

SUSAN. It's a sad affliction, to be sure—a very great defect—she's much to be pitied.

CHAS. A defect? *another* defect? and I have committed myself—I've proposed——

SUSAN. Oh, sir!

CHAS. Speak out, do.

SUSAN. Many years ago——

CHAS. That's as bad as "once upon a time." Pray go on—make haste.

SUSAN. My mistress was thrown from her horse——

CHAS. Yes—well, she was not *killed*, so what then?

SUSAN (*pretending to weep*). Fractured limb——

CHAS. Oh! what limb?

SUSAN. Leg—broke all to bits, and——

CHAS. Well, speak.

SUSAN. Amputation——

CHAS. What?

SUSAN. She has got a cork leg.

CHAS. A *cork leg!* Horror! What have I done? engaged myself—I shall go mad!

SUSAN. Good morning, sir. I must go, if you please, to give my mistress the stick. [*Exit.*

CHAS. Do, by all means. I deserve the stick worst. I, that

said I would marry perfection—I've bound myself to the fraction of a woman. [*Exit.*

TOO ATTENTIVE BY HALF.

From J. Maddison Morton's Farce of "Betsey Baker."

CHARACTERS.

MR. MARMADUKE MOUSER, *Attorney-at-Law.*
MR. CRUMMY, *his Partner.*
BETSY BAKER, *Laundress.*

TIME.—*The present period.*

SCENE.—*A handsomely furnished Apartment. Doors right and left. Tables, chairs, etc.*

[In order to comprehend the true intention of the following scene, taken from a most ludicrous but extravagant farce, it is neccessary to premise that MR. MOUSER, a recently married man, is so anxious in his attentions to his wife in public and private that he not only neglects the business of the firm of which he is the senior, but incurs the resentment of his wife through fear of provoking expressions of ridicule from persons witnessing his excessive demonstrations of marital affection. Both these errors in judgment his partner, Crummy, Mouser's wife's cousin, to whom she had complained of his being "too attentive by half," resolves to correct by a lively conspiracy with Betsy Baker, a laundress of the neighborhood, in order to convey to Mrs. Mouser the impression that her husband is deceiving her under the mask of extraordinary devotion. As the scene opens Mr. Crummy has just returned from a professional visit to Mrs. General Jones, who refuses to consult with other than the senior partner of the firm.]

CRUMMY *discovered in meditation.*

CRUMMY. "Too attentive by half!" Then it is as I feared, and that simpleton, Mouser, doesn't see that he is persecuting his wife with his affection. She evidently dreads a conjugal tete-a-tete, and no wonder. He never leaves her for a moment, but there he is, eternally and everlastingly at her side, "sighing like a furnace," and making himself ridiculous in her eyes. Mischief will certainly come of it. Some remedy must be devised. But what? If I could only contrive to excite Anastasia's suspicions that her husband, like Major General Jones, is not exactly satisfied with one attachment at a time—by this means her jealousy might be aroused. But she wouldn't believe *me*. No, Mouser himself must supply the materials. But how? (BETSY BAKER *knocks*) Come in!

BETSY *appears with a small parcel.*

BETSY. Mrs. Mouser's veil——

CRUM. Come in, my dear.

BETSY. Pattens and all, sir?

CRUM. No. You may leave them outside.

BETSY. If it's the same to you, sir, I'd rather not.

CRUM. Then take them off at all events.

BETSY. Of course, sir. (*takes off her pattens and comes forward, carrying them in her hand*) It isn't likely I should go for to walk on a carpet, especially when the roads are so dreadful muddy. (*putting her pattens down on table with a slam.*)

CRUM. Zounds! don't put 'em on the table. (*taking pattens from* BETSY.)

BETSY. I'm sure I don't know what to do with 'em, so put 'em where you like.

CRUM. Ha, ha! Heyday! I think I ought to know that face again.

BETSY. If you ever saw it before, you certainly ought.

CRUM. Have I not met you rather frequently of late walking of an evening with our young clerk, Joseph Harris?

BETSY. Yes, sir. We've rather delicate constitutions both of us, so we generally go out for a little fresh air and exercise every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, after work hours. We can't get out on any other evenings, sir. I suppose you're Mr. Crummy? You're not Mr. Mouser. We all know him.

CRUM. We! Who?

BETSY. Why all us girls at the Laundry over the way. Ah, there's a pattern for a husband! 'Tisn't every woman, sir, as gets a Mouser. No, sir—Mousers are scarce.

CRUM. And yet you'd take your chance and marry Joseph Harris?

BETSY. Just try me! And now I think of it, sir, he has told me more than once that you said if ever he found a nice, genteel, respectable young woman that he'd like to marry, you'd do something for him, sir.

CRUM. Oh, then you, I suppose, are the——

BETSY. The young woman? Yes, sir. Elizabeth Baker. The youngest of sixteen sisters, and all of 'em girls, sir—and all hard working girls too, sir. It's worth going over to our Laundry to see us, sir. Fancy sixteen Bakers a-washing, all in a row!

CRUM. Well, I'll bear my promise in mind.

BETSY. Don't you think you'd better get it off your mind at once, sir? There's a nice little shop in the green-grocery line, to be let at the corner of the street—and, as Harris doesn't seem very fond of the law, it would be the very thing for us.

CRUM. (*aside*). Egad, here's an opportunity for driving a bargain! She's a smart little body enough, and if she can only be

induced to act as I direct—I'll feel the ground at all events. (*aloud*) I suppose you've brought Mrs. Mouser's veil. (*pointing to parcel.*)

BETSY. Yes, sir.

CRUM. Mr. Mouser called and told *you* to do so, eh?

BETSY. He didn t address himself to any of us in particular, sir. He just popped his head in at the door and said, "Mrs. Mouser wants her veil directly," and then took to his heels as if he was frightened to look at any other woman but his wife. Lor! What a happy couple they must be!

CRUM. (*with a deep sigh*). Happy! (*solemnly*) They are *not* a happy couple!

BETSY. Lawks!

CRUM. Yet they might be—but unfortunately, there is only one person in the world who could make them so.

BETSY. And who is that?

CRUM. You!

BETSY (*with a jump*). Me! I'm sure I'll set about it directly if you'll only tell me how.

CRUM. I will. (*looks mysteriously about him*—BETSY *watches him with astonishment—then in a loud whisper*) You must fall in love with Mr. Mouser.

BETSY. Sir!

CRUM. And Mr. Mouser must instantly fall in love with you.

BETSY (*staring at him—then, with dignity*). Give me my pattens, sir, and let me go. Give me my pattens, I say!

CRUM. Pshaw, child! You misunderstand me. Listen—your sudden passion for Mouser——

BETSY. My pattens, sir! (*seizing half of them and trying to pull them out of his hand.*)

CRUM. Oh! Very well! It's a pity, too—for a married couple might do very well——

BETSY. My pattens!

CRUM. At that little greengrocer's shop at the corner of the street.

BETSY. My pat—(*letting go the pattens*) Well, they're not worth making a piece of work about

CRUM. (*smiling*). Oh! Then, as I was going to say, your passion for Mouser, will, of course, be merely assumed, but you must contrive to make him fall in love with you, in downright earnest.

BETSY. I can't do it. I wouldn't mind trying if I wasn't such a dragon of virtue—but I'm sorry to say I am.

CRUM. Then he must fall in love with somebody else—and the little shop must go to somebody else.

BETSY. Oh, lor, sir! Then I'll do my best—but if I could not succeed in captivating Mr. Mouser?

CRUM. Then somebody else will.

BETSY. But if he should happen to captivate me?

CRUM. That's your affair.

BETSY. But why—why am I to do all this?

CRUM. That's my affair.

BETSY. But what will Mrs. Mouser say?

CRUM. That's her affair.

BETSY. But she'll go and imagine all sorts of things.

CRUM. I hope she will. Come, is it a bargain? Will you have Joseph Harris and the little greengrocer's shop, or will you take your pattens and go? (*offering them.*)

BETSY. You can keep the pattens.

CRUM. Spoken like a sensible girl. (*places pattens in passage*) I expect Mouser every minute.

BETSY. Oh, lud! (*about to run off.*)

CRUM. Don't run away! (*stopping her.*)

BETSY. But consider, sir, you can't expect me to act a part at a moment's notice.

CRUM. Then take that veil to Mrs. Mouser, and in a few minutes you can come back, and be sure you *do* come back.

Enter MOUSER.

BETSY (*looking at him*). Well, I don't think there's much danger of my falling in love with *him.* (MOUSER, *who has put his hat, etc., on table, turns and sees* BETSY, *who runs off.*)

MOUS. (*severely to* CRUMMY). Mr. Crummy, who is that young person?

CRUM. Ha! ha! Come, I like that! Go along!

MOUS. But *I* don't like it, sir—neither shall I go along. I repeat, who is that young person?

CRUM. Ha! ha! You do it very well, Mouser—but it won't do—ugh! you Don Juan! (*poking him in the side.*)

MOUS. (*after a look of astonishment at* CRUMMY, *then aside*). Can he have been drinking thus early?

CRUM. But I really think you might have waited till I was out of the room before you——

MOUS Before I what, sir?

CRUM. You know—this sort of thing, eh? (*winking at* MOUSER) I suppose you thought I shouldn't see you do it, eh?

MOUS. Do it? Do what?

CRUM. Wink at her.

MOUS. (*with grandeur*). Mr. Crummy!

CRUM. That's right—brazen it out—but let me tell you, sir, I have had my eye upon you and that young woman for some time past.

MOUS. Oh, damn it, I can't stand this! You forget that you're a junior partner, sir.

CRUM. And you forget that I'm your wife's cousin, sir; yes, sir! and I'll not allow you to impose upon her with your pretended af-

fection, you good-for-nothing little hypocrite, you, while you carry on a intrigue under her very nose, sir!

MOUS. Nose, sir?

CRUM. No, sir! Neither will I suffer you to trifle with the feelings of one that I am determined shall not fall into the trap you have laid, sir. You know who I mean—Baker, sir! (*going round him in front to left.*)

MOUS. *I* trifle with the feelings of a Baker! *I* lay a trap for a Baker! You're talking nonsense, Crummy!

CRUM. Come, come. Now that you see I've found you out, tell me how you contrived to wheedle poor Betsy out of her affections?

MOUS. Crummy, I'm not apt to make use of strong language; but by the living jingo! I never wheedled a Betsy out of anything in all my life!

CRUM. Well, I suppose I must believe you. But intentionally or not, you certainly have made a most powerful impression on her youthful heart! She confessed as much to me just now.

MOUS (*gradually dropping his look of indignation, and with self-satisfaction*). Poor Betsy! I'm very sorry for her, I'm sure! I say, Crummy, she's a niceish little sort of a girl enough.

CRUM. Umph! so so! (*in a contemptuous tone.*)

MOUS. So so! Now, let's be just. Crummy, let's be just. She has good eyes, Crummy, umph?

CRUM. Squints a little.

MOUS. Does she? I've never noticed her in the slightest degree whatever, but I'm damn'd if she squints!

CRUM. At any rate her eyes seem good enough to have noticed *you*. But knowing you to be free from blame in the matter, I reasoned with her, told her the folly of fixing her affections upon a married man, but all in vain; so *you'd* better take her in hand.

MOUS. Do you think so?

CRUM. Certainly; you can talk to her seriously, but kindly.

MOUS. Of course I shouldn't go and behave like a brute to her! I shouldn't go to blow Betsy up.

CRUM. Certainly not; for, after all, the poor girl is more to be pitied than blamed.

MOUS. Crummy, that sentiment does you honor! It shows that the milk of human kindness flows in your bosom, Crummy. (*shaking* CRUMMY'S *hand.*)

BETSY (*without*). Very well, ma'am, I'll be sure to remember it.

CRUM. That's her voice! There's something lively and cheerful about it, eh?

MOUS. Yes, yes, it's a pleasant voice, Crummy. (*arranging his cravat, etc*)

CRUM. She *might* have gone out by the back door, but of course she knew that *you* were here. Ha! ha! (*nudging* MOUSER, *then retires up.*)

MOUS. Pooh! Go along! I believe you're about right though, 'pon my life I do!

Enter BETSY.

BETSY (*seeing* MOUSER). There stands my wretched victim! He little knows what's going to happen to him.

CRUM. (*aside to* BETSY). Now then, attention! (*aloud*) Well, my dear, Mrs. Mouser was pleased with her veil, I hope?

BETSY (*crossing*). Oh, yes, sir, but in getting it up, somehow or other, I run the iron through it. I suppose I was thinking of something else. (*looking languidly at* MOUSER, *then aside to* CRUMMY) How's that?

CRUM. (*aside to her*). Capital!

MOUS. (*in a plaintive tone, and approaching her*). Dear, dear, so you run the iron though it, did you? What a pity!

BETSY (*with pretended emotion*). Oh, sir! (*letting the veil fall—aside to* CRUMMY) How's that?

CRUM. (*aside to her*). Can't be better!

MOUS. (*aside*). It's a clear case. Poor *creetur!* (*picks up the veil and offers it to* BETSY,)

BETSY. Oh, sir! (*taking the veil and squeezing his hand—aside*) I've done it!

MOUS. (*aside*) She squeezed my hand!

CRUM (*to* BETSY). Perhaps you've seen Mr. Mouser before. (*aside to her*) Sigh! (*crosses behind.*)

BETSY. Heigho! (*aloud*) Oh, yes, sir. I often see Mr. Mouser. I saw him go out yesterday at thirteen minutes past four, and come in again at twenty-seven minutes and a half past five.

CRUM. (*aside to* MOUSER). You see she counts the very minutes. (*aloud*) This is the young person who's going to marry our clerk, Joseph Harris.

MOUS. Soon?

CRUM. That depends on her. Harris wishes the marriage to take place immediately, but there seems to be some *slight obstacle* on her part—and, strange to say, she won't tell *me* what it is.

MOUS. (*aside*). The thing's evident. I'm the slight obstacle.

CRUM. Perhaps *you'll* be more fortunate. (*turning as going up.*)

MOUS. (*aside to him*). Good gracious, Crummy, don't go and leave us alone.

CRUM. (*aside to him*). Of course! You've done the mischief and you must repair it. (*to* BETSY) Good by, my good girl.

BETSY (*with pretended alarm*). You're not going, sir!

MOUS. Poor soul! She hopes he's not a-going. (*aside.*)

CRUM. (*aside to* BETSY). Capitally, capitally acted, so far. Only carry it on a little longer and the shop is yours. (*aside to* MOUSER) Did you ever see such a pair of eyes? (*aside, as he goes out*) I'll not lose sight of them. [*Exit.*

MOUSER *and* BETSY *stand at opposite sides of the stage. Their eyes meet once or twice, she dropping them with emotion, and he drawing himself up and trying to appear indifferent.* CRUMMY *crosses unseen behind door.*

BETSY Poor man! He'll never begin, so I suppose I must. (*aloud*) Sir!

MOUS. (*aside*). Mouser, be firm. No damned nonsense. Do your duty, Mouser, and that duty commands you instantly to plunge a dagger into the heart that adores you. Well, Miss Baker? (*with great indifference. His back to her.*)

BETSY. Those as likes me calls me Betsy. (*in a plaintive tone*) Call me Betsy, sir!

MOUS. No, Betsy; I shall not call you Betsy; I never do call people by their Christian names, Betsy; never, Betsy! never, Betsy!

BETSY. No more do I, unless they're very, *very* pretty ones indeed, such as John and Timothy and Marma*dook*. (*in a tender tone, and approaching him.*)

MOUS. (*aside*). Mouser, be firm. (*turning to* BETSY, *and seeing her close to him, begins whistling again.* BETSY *retires a step or two and approaches him again*) So you think Marda*dook* a pretty name, eh?

BETSY. Yes, sir. I could go on making rhymes to it all day long, as I stand at the washing tub; just like the man in the play—

There's not a name in any book
As can compare with Marma*dook*.
No breeze as e'er the treeses shook,
Sounds half as sweet as Marma*dook*.

MOUS. (*aside*). It was wrong in me to stop. I feel it was highly wrong in me to stop. (*aloud*) But remember you are going to marry a Joseph.

BETSY (*with sudden violence, and close to* MOUSER). Never!

MOUS. (*jumping away*). Don't. But why not?

BETSY. I don't want to marry; I never *will* marry; I'll live and die a Baker! (*with great energy.*)

MOUS. But your reason—your motive—for dying a Baker?

BETSY (*with a pathetic look at* MOUSER). Can *you* ask? *You? you?* Oh, 'tis too much! Oh! oh! oh! (*aside*) I wonder how I'm doing it. (*hiding her face in her hands and sobbing.*)

MOUS. Hush, hush! (*tenderly*) Don't cry—don't make such a row, Miss Baker.

BETSY. Call me Betsy.

MOUS. Very well, Betsy. (*aside*) I've been *too* firm. Mouser, you have been by many degrees too firm. (*aloud, and taking her hand*) Now don't cry, there's a dear. (*aside*) I called her a dear.

Here CRUMMY *looks in and observes.*

There—there—and, now laugh—laugh directly, you little rogue. (*aside*) I called her a little rogue. (*chucks her under the chin, then kissing her fingers aside.*)

BETSY (*looking nervously towards the door*). Oh, I think I'd better go now, sir.

MOUS. Don't be in a hurry, Betsy. He! he! he! my pretty little Betsy. For you *are* pretty—*very*—*very*—he! he! (*laughs to himself, then aside*) I'm going it! I feel I'm rapidly becoming a horrid, good for-nothing little rascal! But I can't help it.

BETSY (*trying to disengage her hand*). But, sir, what would Mrs. Mouser think?

MOUS. (*recklessly*). Mrs. Mouser may think whatever she likes. There, what d'ye say to that? Ha! ha! who's afraid? (*suddenly and very loud*) Betsy, embrace your Marma*dook!*

BETSY, *frightened, takes up her pattens and holds them out, threatening him.* MOUSER *rushes at* BETSY, *he takes the veil.*

CRUM. (*without*). Very well, I shall find him.

BETSY. Oh Lud! (*runs out at door.*)

MOUS. Cousin Crummy! (*follows her to the door, then crams the veil into his pocket and begins to whistle very loud.*)

Enter CRUMMY.

CRUM. Oh, you're alone, are you?

MOUS. Yes, yes. Amusing myself as well as I can. La, la, la! (*singing.*)

CRUM. Oh, then she's been gone some time, I suppose?

MOUS. She? who? (*pretending to remember*) Oh, yes—little Betsy—of course—I remember. Ha! ha! ha! How you could have got such an absurd notion into your head, I can't imagine. The girl never even thought of me!

CRUM. (*aside*). The little hypocrite! (*aloud*) Then I must have made a mistake.

MOUS. A mistake of the most gigantic dimensions, Crummy.

CRUM. Well—by the bye, your wife wants her veil. Where is it? (*looking about*) Where's the veil?

MOUS. Veil? Oh, here it is, but you know it wants mending.

CRUM. Oh, never mind a little tear like that.

MOUS. (*tearing a large hole in the veil, aside*). A little tear! It's tremendous! Look here. (*showing it*) So I'll just leave it with the young woman when I go past. (*aside*) With a *note* inside requesting her to come here this evening, when my wife is out. I'm rushing headlong into all sorts of iniquities! But, as I said before, I can't help it. (*gets hat, etc., from the table.*)

CRUM. You're going out again?

MOUS. (*imitating him*). Going out again, what a question! Doesn't Mrs. Major General Jones expect me?

CRUM. (*smiling*). Again?

MOUS. Yes, sir, again! This case of Jones *vs.* Jones is a very complicated case, sir, and I must get a counsel's opinion.

CRUM. Then of course you can't accompany Anastasia to her sister's?

MOUS. Anastasia! Oh, true, I forgot her.

CRUM. (*aside*). Forgot his wife! Better and better. Ha! ha! (*aloud*) Oh, here she comes—you can accompany her part of the way.

MOUS. Eh? Yes, yes, of course! (*pulling out his watch and looking at it, then with pretended surprise*) Goodness gracious! I shall be too late for Mrs. Major General Jones. (*he rushes out.*)

COLD POISON.

From F. C. Durand's Burlesque of "Villikins and Dinah."

CHARACTERS.

MASTER GRUMBLETON GRUFFIN, *a rich* (*soap*) *Merchant of London, the original "Parient."*

BARON BORKI BUMBLE, *Ancestor of the celebrated Beadle, the original "Lovier so gallant and gay."*

WILLIAM WILKINS, *socially and convivially known as Villikins, a young 'prentice-boy desperately in love.*

DINAH GRUFFIN, *the sole "Feminine female offspring" of the above-mentioned soap merchant, and overwhelmingly in love with the bold 'prentice boy.*

SCENE.—*A back kitchen garden with a romantic view of cabbages, cucumbers and other vegetables.*

TIME—*Period of King Ortaxoninous the Great.*

[Mr. Durand's burlesque is a creditable attempt to relieve the stage from the inimitable, yet hackneyed Bombastes Furioso. Being written expressly for amateur performance, the closing scene, which we give, affords ample scope for grotesque acting.]

Enter DINAH, *with bottle.*

DINAH. I've got the draught. I said the rats and mice
It would destroy. Oh, my! it don't smell nice—
Now all alone I'll drink it every drop.

Enter BARON, *intoxicated.*

What noise is that?—
BARON. For me I pray don't stop—
My dearest Dinah—
DINAH. Dinah! yes I see,
And rather worse for *diner*, it strikes me—(*aside*)
Curse on the interruption—what a bore!
BARON. I left old Gruffin lying on the floor—
He can't stand wine, it gets into his head.
DINAH. Pray don't you think you'd better go to bed?
BARON. To bed! ha, ha!
DINAH (*aside*). Yes! 'tis my only chance!
BARON. You don't know what you now say—let's have a dance,
My dearest (*hiccoughs*) does your mother know you're out?
But seriously—don't waggle so about!
Stand still as I do—steady now, like this—
My dearest Dinah—will you give us a kiss?
(*attempts to catch her, and falls.*)
DINAH. Hands off! you wretch! and pause before you lay
Your *paws* on me. Now just mind what I say.
BARON. Mind you're my wife—or that is, will be—
DINAH. Never!
Now from your toils I'll free myself for ever! (*drinks poison.*)
BARON (*looking helplessly on*).
I say you've had enough—just stop! now there—
As you are a fair one drinking—pray *drink fair.*
DINAH. A mist comes o'er my eyes—my sight grows dim.
My father! Villikins! could I see but him!
My dream's come true. Ah, me! how faint I am,
Tho' 'tis a faint, I feel this *faint* no *sham*,
I'm going—going—going!
BARON (*rousing himself*). Where?
DINAH. To die!
Baron—I've sold you—
BARON. What!
DINAH. Ta! ta! good-by! (*she dies.*)
BARON. Ta! ta! Good-by! why, what the deuce is this,
This miss lying here proves something is a *amiss.*
(*stoops over the body.*)

Enter VILLIKINS.

VIL. I cannot find her—ha! what's that I see?
The object of my search—and also he

Whom most of all men I do wish to meet—
Baron—ahem!

BARON (*seeing him*). Villikins—here's a treat!

VIL. What Dinah here! my love at last I've found
My fear's not groundless! dead upon the *ground.*
What can I do? in what way show my grief?
To pour forth moans is but a *poor* relief!
No! for thy death I will take vengeance sore,
Though you're no artist, I dare you to draw!

BARON. What, fight with you!—ha! ha, a low-born fellar!
You have no sword——

VIL. But here's an umbrella!
Or stay, without your host I think you've reckoned,
Stop—and I'll get a good'un in a second—
(*goes to wing and gets a combat sword*)
There is a neat one—now what shall it be—
Over and under—or, a one, two, three?

BARON. The first we'll have, sir, if it pleases you.
(*aside*) About this *broil* I feel in a great *stew.*

VIL. Now then—to arms!

BARON (*aside*). Oh, lor! to arms? 'ifegs;
I'd infinitely rather he had said to legs.

VIL. Cut on!

BARON. Cut on! to cut off would be hard!
Oh if my ma' could see me now—

VIL. On guard!
(*melodramatic music—they fight*)
There, take your breath—

BARON. Thank ye, I don't feel strong—
Don't you think this would do for to-day?

VIL. Come on!
(*they fight.* BARON *is run through the body.*)

BARON. O, Villikins! you've cooked my goose I know—
I feel I'm going, where good niggers go;
Yet what is this bout of fighting's been *about,*
Upon my word I really can't make out—
If you think Dinah by my death to wed—
You can't—'cos why?—ha! ha! because she's dead!
(*dies.*)

VIL. "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!"—'tis too true—
Dinah is dead—that's one—and you are *too.*
How did she die? oh horror! as I thought,
Her dream's come true—she'd been and pison bought.
Oh lips! yet warm, with you this death I'll halve,
And my destruction shall be your lip *salve!*
Yes, in this bottle still enough remains
At once to free me from all mundane pains—

'Ere I join thee, love, it will not be long.
(is about to drink—stops)
Lor! I forgot I'm dying without a song.

SONG.—VILLIKINS.—AIR, "*Sam Hall.*"

On her this bottle small,
Bottle small, etc.
Of which she has drank all,
Has darkness caused to fall,
And dimmed her eyes, etc.
So she's dead!

I cannot but surmise,
But surmise, etc.
That this bottle of small size,
Closed in death, as she lies,
Fast her eyes, etc.
So she's dead!

But now I prepares
For this drop, etc.
Death in the face me stares,
And thus end all my cares,
By one drop, etc.

Now for it—here is some mistake, oh my!
I got no one to speak to whilst I die!
Oh, yes I have. Come hither, Bob, my friend,
And play me some soft air—*which air* may tend
To soothe *this ear* soon now to be at rest.
Whilst I drink, play—you know what I like best.
Without slow music, leave this scene I couldn't—
Now play up, Bobby! (*band strikes up "Charming Judy Callaghan."* VILLIKINS *reproachfully to band*)
Oh, I wish you wouldn't! (*the band plays "Villikins and his Dinah," very slowly.* VILLIKINS *drinks poison and dies.*)

Music "Woodman, spare that tree." Enter GRUFFIN, *slightly intoxicated, and smoking a pipe.*

SONG.—GRUFFIN.—AIR, "*Woodman, spare that tree.*"

Oh, I feel rather queer,
And can hardly talk;
It wasn't the wine or beer,
But that confounded pork.

(*very maudlin*) This was my father's pipe,
I've seen it in his hand—

Why, what's the matter with me?
For I can scarcely stand.

This is the state of a man, to-day—quite thick
He bears his blushing honors like a brick.
At six o'clock comes dinner—jolly dinner,
And when he thinks—miscalculating sinner—
After the dinner he is all right full surely
He takes a pipe, and feels uncommon poorly—
And then he falls as I do. (*falls*) Hey! what's this?
My daughter lying here—something amiss.
Villikins, too—and Bumble! Here's a diskivery!
It's very cold down here I feel quite shivery—
I will get up. (*tries and falls*) No, I'll try to sleep.
I feel a sort of something o'er me creep.
Baron! (*shouting*) His shoulder'll serve me like sleep's lap,
And on this *Bony part* I'll take my *Nap*. (*rests his head on* BARON'S *shoulder, sleeps.*—BARON *rolls over*—GRUFFIN'S *head falls on the ground.—Ghost music from the "Corsican Brothers." The ghost of* VILLIKINS *rises on one side, and of* DINAH *on the other side of* GRUFFIN.)

SONG.—"*Corsican Brothers.*."

VIL. Gruffin, Gruffin,
After stuffing
Dinner, in a trance done up.
DINAH. Father, father,
The cause rather
Of my suicidal cup.
GRUFF. (*sitting up trembling, and looking at* VILLIKINS).
Oh, please don't, sir,
And I won't, sir,
Do the like, sir, any more;
Fear I'll smother,
Here's another,
Whom I saw stretched on the floor.
(*turns to sleep and sees* DINAH.)
VIL. "Let me sit heavy on thy soul," oh, Gruffin,
As income tax unpaid, or buttered muffin.
Think upon me and let thy soul despair,
When on *dis pair* it thinks, and may dull care
Drive thee to madness, Gruffin, since in life
Thou would'st not give me Dinah for my wife.
My visits shall be neither far between nor few,
The "haunted man" shall be a joke to you.
DINAH. Dream on thy daughter, pison'd in her bower,
Alive and kicking, kicked within this hour

The fatal bucket. Oh! you may well turn *pa(i)le,*
Since to my *bier* I m brought who was so *hale.*
But to haunt thee I'll bind myself by vows,
Since when alive, you refused as my spouse,
Poor Villikins! The baron is now dead, so I
Bid thee think on me, then "despair and die."

(*the* GHOSTS *lie down again.*)

GRUFF. (*starting up*) Give me another pipe. Where are my fuzees —where *?*
Why, goodness gracious! 'twas but the nightmare.
But there are ghosts here. Alas, there they lie!
Methought they both appeared, and said 'twas I
Who murdered them, and with this they did taunt me—
The worst of it is that they're going to haunt me!
And every night when I'm in bed undrest,
These restless spirits will destroy my rest,
Crying, Gruffin hath murdered sleep. But I will do 'em,
I'll just employ a little blarney to 'em.
Alas, poor ghost! that's the correct address—
If I in life got you in any mess,
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned——

GHOST OF VILLIKINS. Don't swear.

GRUFF. I didn't! If I did I'm——

GHOST OF VILLIKINS. Crammed!

GRUFF. Oh, lor, he heard me! here's a situation!
To appease him I'll try an incantation!

SONG.—AIR, "*Giles Scroggins' Ghost.*"

Oh! Villikins, what can I do,
Ri tiddy, etc.
In any way to appease you,
Ri tiddy, etc.
If you were alive instead of dead,
Ri tiddy, etc.
You should my daughter Dinah wed,
Ri tiddy fol, etc.

VIL. Your promise give that if alive now,
Ri tiddy, etc.
I should your daughter wed, I vow,
Ri tiddy, etc.

GRUFF. So, Mr. Ghost, you'll quiet lie,
Ri tiddy, etc.
And not haunt me no more.

VIL. (*jumping up*). Not I!

GRUFF. } Ri tiddy fol, etc.
VIL. }

GRUEF. But Dinah's dead, so that wont do,
Ri tiddy fol, etc.
DINAH (*rising*). Papa, don't say what isn't true,
Ri tiddy fol, etc.
And now a happy pair we'll make,
(*giving her hand to* VILLIKINS) Ri tiddy, etc.
GRUFF. Well my promise is gone—so my blessiug take.
Ri tiddy fol, etc.
BARON (*getting up*). But I forbid the banns!
VIL. You'd better not,
Or a real ghost I'll make you like a shot.
BARON. Don't mention it—if it's all the same,
To you I don't mind giving up my claim.
GRUFF. Ah! that is well—now that we all are friends,
Happily Villikins and Dinah ends.
So let's within the house—no bed to-night—
We won't go home till morning——
VIL. That's not right—
For there would be a damp on all our pleasure,
Unless the house's sense upon this measure
You first shall take——
(BARON *steps forward*—GRUFFIN *pushes him back*)
GRUFF. Seniores priores—means
That I'm to address their *aures* from these *scenes*.
Well, all I can say is——
VIL. Nothing! that'll do.
GRUFF. My boy, you never said a word so true!
VIL. Kind friends in front—if not to quibbles blunted—
(Although in front—pray do not be *affronted*)
Forgive our faults—we've done the best we could,
If we could do more, I am sure we would.
If the piece pleases not, don't blame us—for there
Is a trifling personage called the author,
Blame him alone—if blame you must, then do it
Best in this manner, he's accustomed to it—
If in your hands we read the word "succeed,"
Villikins
DINAH. And his Dinah
VIL. Will be glad indeed.

FINALE.—"*Villikins.*"

DINAH. All the world is a stage—a Shakespearian fact.
BARON. And every one in it does naught else but act.
GRUFF. We're players to night, you the audience part take,
VIL. And your slightest applause will us most happy make.
(*affecting but concluding chorus*) Tu ral lal, etc.

KILLING TIME.

From a French farce—"Love and Rain."

CHARACTERS.

LADY JANE DESMOND, *a young Widow.*
CAPTAIN CHARLES LUMLEY, *of the Army.*
A SERVANT, *unseen on stage.*

SCENE.—*An elegant apartment with two doors.*

TIME—*The present day.*

[Lady Desmond, inhabiting a country seat in Devonshire, is terribly annoyed at the long continuance of a rain season which has not only prevented her enjoyment of field sports, but has precluded the possibility of receiving visits from friends, as the roads are completely flooded. She has for some time been likewise in tribulation on account of the presence in her neighborhood of Crackskull, a notorious highwayman, whose arrest however had been reported. The widow is in hourly expectation of the arrival of the Merediths, a wealthy family, who have promised a long visit the instant the storm would cease and to bring with them a gentleman as a suitor for her hand. In the meanwhile Lady Desmond experiences "the blues" during protracted continuance of the rain, when, perceiving a stranger near her villa, orders her servant to bring him into the house in order to amuse her by his company until the storm should abate. In order to detain him the lady resorts to many expedients, and during his stay the stranger maintains a reluctant conversation, narrating his experience during the Crimean campaign, giving elaborate explanations of military terms and of the manner in which the siege had been carried on. He had reached the third parallel, defined the positions of the various sappers, and was to describe the situation of the fourth, when the rain suddenly ceased, whereupon the lady became as anxious for the departure of the stranger as she had previously been to detain him. The following scene ensues.]

As the curtain rises, both characters are discovered in careless conversation, seated in two chairs or upon a sofa near a table.

LADY JANE DESMOND. My good sir, if you have no objection, we will leave the fourth sapper where he is, until a better opportunity.

CHAS. Eh?

LADY J. I should feel quite ashamed to detain you any longer. Good morning, sir. (*rises*)

CHAS. (*aside*). Another change! (*aloud*) But, Madam, allow me to assure you that I am not at all in a hurry to——

LADY J. Oh, yes you are; so pray stand on no ceremony, but go at once, for the present sunshine may be but brief.

CHAS. (*aside*). Ah! at last I think I understand the motive of—— (*rises.*)

LADY J. And before you leave, pray accept my thanks for the entertaining hour which your presence here has afforded me. I shall never forget those sappers. Good morning, sir.

CHAS. (*aside, taking his hat from table*). She would not let me go while it rained, and bundles me off as soon as the fine weather returns. She had got the blues, that was it, and detained me to talk about trenches and sappers, to enliven her. A very delightful part I have been made to play! She deserves to be punished, and I have no means to do so. Oh! if I were but able to give her a good lesson.

LADY J. (*aside*). He appears very loath to go—clings to his fourth sapper.

CHAS. (*approaching* LADY JANE). I thank you, madam, for the hospitality you have granted me. (*crossing*) Good morning, madam.

LADY J. (*coming forward*). I shall never forget, sir, that you have caused me to pass the most agreeable hour which for the last six months I have known. (*aside*) I certainly owed him that little compliment, and in point of fact it is the truth.

CHAS. That one hour, madam, will make the two appear very long to me which yet must pass before the train can arrive. Once more, good morning, madam (*opening door.*)

LADY J. If you will take my advice, sir, (CHAS. *stops*) you will employ those two hours in visiting the beautiful spots of our neighborhood. You may view them without fear of being stopped and plundered, or perhaps killed by the notorious Crackskull.

CHAS. (*puzzled*) Crackskull?

LADY J. Crackskull is an atrocious ruffian, who for a long time has been the terror of everybody for miles around, and of myself in particular.

CHAS. (*aside, energetically*). Now I have got her!

LADY J. It was only yesterday that he was captured.

CHAS. And I saw him this morning near the railway station, on his way to Newgate.

LADY J. He is no doubt there by this time, and we are well rid of him.

CHAS. No, madam; not yet.

LADY J. How can that be, since he is a prisoner, in fetters?

CHAS. A man of vast cunning, and incredible strength, Crackskull contrived to free himself from the chains which bound him—knocked to the ground and wounded seventeen policemen, then fled across the country, beyond all chance of pursuit.

LADY J. Oh, heaven! He is free then?

CHAS. As free as you or I, madam.

LADY J. The thought of it makes me tremble! The very name

of Crackskull inspires me with terror! Morally and physically, I am told, he is a frightful monster—a hideous ruffian!

CHAS. You have been misinformed, madam.

LADY J. Ah, true! you have seen him, and can tell me——

CHAS. His hair is exactly like *mine.*

LADY J. Ah!

CHAS. He has *my* nose, *my* mouth, and *my* whiskers.

LADY J. (*uneasily*). You must resemble him then very strikingly, sir.

CHAS. Very strikingly, madam.

LADY J. (*with curiosity*). And his figure—his height?

CHAS. Are mine exactly.

LADY J. (*very uneasy*). And his age?

CHAS. Is mine precisely—although not twins, we were born together.

LADY J. (*frightened*). Good heavens! then——

CHARLES *locks door, right, then goes over and locks door, left,* LADY JANE *shrinking back in great terror.*

LADY J. Wh—what are you about? Who are you, sir?

CHAS. (*advancing to centre, and throwing himself into a melo-dramatic attitude*). I am the dreaded Crackskull! Ha, ha, ha!

LADY J. (*crouching*) Horror!

CHAS. Not a cry—not a gesture!

LADY J. Shut up with Crackskull—(*trembling*) awful!

CHAS. Remember that you yourself introduced me.

LADY J. Oh, dear!

CHAS. Caused violence to be employed to bring me here.

LADY J. What would you do, sir? (*producing her purse*) Here is some loose silver.

CHAS. (*with a violent start*). What do you take me for?

LADY J. I beg your pardon, Mr. Crackskull, you require gold of course?

CHAS. You suppose me, then, a common thief? Insulting female! First you take me for a glazier, and now——

LADY J. Diamonds, then?

CHAS. My cave is full of them.

LADY J. What, then, would you have?

CHAS. My wishes are the same as your own—amusement during the wet weather.

LADY J. What, then, must I do?

CHAS. Fall in love with me directly.

LADY J. (*shrinking—terrified*), Oh, oh!

CHAS (*going to her, grasping her arm, and drawing her to centre*). Speak! have you fallen in love with me? (*she slips under his arm and dodges round table.*)

LADY J. Mercy, Mr. Crackskull, mercy!

CHAS. (*trying to reach her*). Mercy! Ha, ha, ha! No, I want amusement during the rain; your love or your life.

LADY J. Oh, don't, Mr. Crackskull, don't!

CHAS. Then love me to distraction immediately. Dare not to trifle with me, I am a desperate man—at war with the whole world—especially the police. (*suddenly darts round table, grasping her arm and dragging her to centre.*)

LADY J. Oh, help! help!

CHAS. Silence, madam, I am armed—with resolution.

LADY J. (*in great terror, sinking almost to the ground*). I will be silent! I—I swear it!

CHARLES *raises himself on the points of his toes, and looks down threateningly at her—an instant's pause—then a knocking is heard at door, left—joyfully starts up and runs towards door*—CHARLES *follows, drags her back, throws her round and casts himself into an extravagant attitude.*

SERVANT (*without—knocking*). My lady! my lady!

CHAS. You may answer, madam.

LADY J. (*agitated and trembling*). Wh-what is the matter, Andrew?

SERVANT (*without*). A telegraphic message, that the Merediths are not coming at all—they can't—the whole country is flooded, and it's raining again, harder than ever.

CHAS. The devil! I must go then. I should be too easily arrested here. (*aside*) And besides, the lesson is sufficient. (*aloud*) Madam, I take my leave of you, and I am quite certain you have no wish to detain me.

SERVANT (*without—loudly*). Sir, sir, you had better make haste and go, for people say there will be such an inundation soon that nobody will be able to leave the place for at least a couple of months.

LADY J. Two months! oh! alone in my misery for two months! (*calling to* CHARLES, *who has opened door, left*) Sir—sir—(*he returns*) Answer me frankly.

CHAS. What?

LADY J. You have often stopped, molested, robbed and plundered travellers.

CHAS. I have been a robber from my cradle, madam.

LADY J. But your hands have never been stained with blood.

CHAS. Never. (*falling on one knee and raising his hand*) Witness my solemn oath.

LADY J. Well then, remain. You are a wretch; but I prefer a robber to—miserable solitude, a thief—to everlasting doldrums, a criminal—to the country after eight months' wet weather.

CHAS. Then of course you intend to marry me?

LADY J. Horrible idea!

CHAS. You know that I am not a glazier; I am of good family, related to the Merediths, of Seaton Lodge.

LADY J. The Merediths?

CHAS. Whom you and I were both expecting here. Mrs. Meredith, you must know, is using her endeavors to get me married to a lady of this neighborhood.

LADY J. Gracious! why I am that lady.

CHAS. Is it possible that you are Lady Jane?

LADY J. And you are——

CHAS. Captain Charles Lumley.

LADY J. (*smiling*). You are sure you are not Mr. Crackskull?

CHAS. (*also smiling*). That respectable gentleman is at this moment occupying a not very comfortable apartment in Newgate. (*rain is heard.*)

LADY J. It's raining dreadfully. Harder than ever.

CHAS. Let it, it cannot damp my happiness if it rains a deluge, for to-morrow you will become my wife.

LADY. Not quite so fast, sir; although I fear that, with proper persuasion, I may ultimately become a victim to the united influence of "Love and Rain."

A CORSICAN VENDETTA.

From John M. Morton's Farce of "A Thumping Legacy."

CHARACTERS.

FILIPPO GERONIMO, *an Innkeeper.*
JERRY OMINOUS, *his Nephew.*

SCENE.—*A garden attached to an inn in an inland village in Corsica. Rustic chairs and table. Wine and glasses upon table.*

TIME—*A quarter of a century since.*

[This is a most effective scene from one of the most ludicrous farces ever written, as the earnestness of the cravenly Filippo stands in amusing contrast to the frivolity of his equally cowardly nephew. The innkeeper, desirous of seducing the presence in Corsica of the son of his brother, who had died in England, indites a letter, purporting to emanate from a notary, desiring that person to come and take possession of the vast property of "his respected uncle, Filippo Geronimo, deceased." Young Geronimo, whose name has been corrupted into Jerry Ominous, swallows the bait and, after a series of ludicrous adventures, arrives in Corsica to find the dead millionaire alive and the keeper of a village tavern. The deluded youth, who is a drug clerk in London, demands an explanation from his relative as to the reason for this imposition with an air of cockney assurance.]

JERRY OMINOUS. Now, then, old fellow——

FILIPPO. Old fellow! Is that the way you talk of your uncle?

JER. He sticks to that! Ahem! Innkeeper, allow me to ask by what right?

FIL. By the right of consanguinity!

JER. That's a long word! what is it?

FIL. Blood.

JER. You're not joking?—you're not dead?

FIL. Neither one nor the other.

JER. Then, sir, what do you mean by such conduct? (*putting his arms akimbo*) And what does that other old rascal of a lawyer mean by sending me a cock and bull story like this? (*showing him the letter*) He won't get six-and-eightpence out of me, I can tell him.

FIL. I wrote that letter.

JER. You?

FIL. (*gravely*). I reported myself dead as the surest means of getting you here.

JER. Ah, and now I am here, I think you are bound as a gentleman not to keep me waiting long.

FIL. Waiting!—what for?

JER. What for? Why, the thumping legacy you mean to leave me when you die.

FIL. I leave you a thumping legacy? No, no, all my property goes to my daughter.

JER. Your daughter?—what daughter?

FIL. My daughter Rosetta!—the bride elect of Bambogetti!

JER. Who's Mr. Bambogetti?

FIL. He that just went out with the Brigadier.

JER. Oh, the tall man that's got an absurd knack of shouting out "Ah!" in one's ear. Well, Uncle Filippo, upon a calm and dispassionate review of the state of affairs, I should say you've rather taken me in!

FIL. I have—and what's more, you'll bless me for it—for after all, what is my property, even if I were king of the island, compared to——

JER. To what?

FIL. Listen! (*looking round mysteriously*—JERRY *following his motions very attentively*) It is now about three hundred years ago——

JER. Three hundred years?—suppose we sit down.

FIL. (*very gravely*). Silence! I say it was about three hundred years since one of our ancestors, a Geronimo, engaged in a lawsuit——

JER. Which I suppose isn't ended yet. Then you've got a Court of Chancery *here*, eh?

FIL. Silence! I repeat——

JER. No, don't repeat—you left one of our ancestors, a Geronimo, engaged in a lawsuit——

FIL. With the family of Leoni. During an attempt to settle the affair amicably, your ancestor killed Leoni.

JER. Killed him—you mean he called him out and shot him?

Fil. Oh, no; he shot him without calling him out.

Jer. Did he?—then my ancestor, peace to his ashes, was a blackguard.

Fil. Silence! immediately, the family feud was declared between the Geronimos and the Leonis, and in the next generation, a Leoni killed a Geronimo.

Jer. Serve him right—that's two. (*counting with his fingers.*)

Fil. Shortly after, a Geronimo killed a Leoni.

Jer. Three. (*counting.*)

Fil. Consequently, in the fourth generation——

Jer. A Leoni killed a Geronimo—four!

Fil. At length came the fifth generation.

Jer. And a Geronimo killed a Leoni—five!

Fil. No, he didn't—to his shame be it spoken, he did not—and that very Geronimo—that base, unworthy member of our house, was your father.

Jer. I see—he didn't kill a Leoni because, perhaps, there wasn't a Leoni to kill.

Fil. There *was* a Leoni—he and your father both went to sea as boys. Leoni entered the service of France, and your father——

Jer. Like a sensible fellow, stuck to the Union Jack of England—at least so I was told.

Fil. They told you true—they both were killed.

Jer. Killed?

Fil. At least, they both died.

Jer Oh, no, my father was drowned—to be sure that's much the same thing in the end—and I, Master Geronimo, or Jerry Ominous, as I was afterwards translated, was put to the naval school of Greenwich, and afterwards bound 'prentice to a chemist and druggist in St. Mary Axe.

Fil. Exactly; it was thro' that channel I found you out.

Jer. Then I wish the channel had been frozen up—but, however, as you were saying, they both died, and so, I presume, did the family feud.

Fil. (*gravely*). In Corsica, a family feud never dies!

Jer. Never dies? Indeed! Well, I thought that peculiarity was confined to donkeys and post-boys.

Fil. Silence! Now comes the all-important and momentous communication—he's here!

Jer. Is he—who?

Fil. The sixth and last——

Jer. What?

Fil. Generation——

Jer. Ah!

Fil. Of the Leonis.

Jer. Oh!

Fil. Since his return to the island, I haven't had a moment's

comfort—the men scowl at me—the children point at me—my inn is deserted—and I'm a wretched Geronimo.

JER. Well, it *is* awkward—yet stay, uncle, it's all right—(*counting his fingers over and recollecting*) it isn't our turn!

FIL. No!

JER. To be sure not. Look here. (*counting his fingers*) Fourth generation, a Leoni killed a Geronimo—the fifth was no go—consequently, the sixth and present generation——

FIL. (*solemnly*). A Geronimo must kill a Leoni!

JER. *Must!* you mean, he may if he likes.

FIL. He must!

JER. You don't mean to tell me that you contemplate such an atrocity?

FIL. Me! of course not, or I shouldn't have sent for *you!*

JER. For me?

FIL. Yes, my gallant nephew—Leoni must fall by your hands.

JER. (*after looking intently at him*). What a remarkably fine afternoon—I'll go and take a stroll. (*going quickly.*)

FIL. (*dragging him back*). What! you hesitate?

JER. No!

FIL Then you consent?

JER. Guess again.

FIL. You refuse!

JER. Of course I do. What a ridiculous question! Look at me, sir, look at me, I say—I'm verging on the brink of unutterable indignation, and if you wasn't my uncle, I'd tell you what I think of you, you execrable old ruffian! I say, if you wasn't my uncle, I'd shake you into fifty bits, I would. (*seizing* FILIPPO *and shaking him.*)

FIL. Nephew, you're a coward!

JER. I deny it; but I've a horror of blood, especially my own.

FIL. (*aside*). I must try and soothe him down. (*aloud*) Nephew, my dear nephew, surely you feel for the honor of your house?

JER. Not much.

FIL. Consent to do this trifle——

JER. Trifle! Ha! ha!

FIL And I'll leave you all my wealth when I die.

JER. Thank ye; but I've had a specimen of your style of dying already.

FIL. You shall marry my daughter, Rosetta; she's very lovely—takes after her mother.

JER. I should think she did of the two; but, I say, I thought you had promised her hand to——

FIL. Bambogetti? I'll manage him; besides, the worst come to the worst, you won't mind his calling you out?

JER. Not in the least; because I shan't go.

FIL. It is a bargain?

JER. Yes—I mean no—no.

FALSE PRIDE AND HUMAN NATURE.

From Morton's Comic Drama of "All that Glitters is not Gold."

CHARACTERS.

JASPER PLUM, *a wealthy Cotton-Spinner.*

STEPHEN PLUM, *his Son.*

SCENE.—*The drawing-room in the mansion of* JASPER PLUM *at Clifton, near Bristol, England.*

TIME.—*The present day.*

[Jasper Plum, proprietor of cotton mills, whose father had made a large fortune through his individual industry, having contracted an alliance between Lady Valeria and his younger son, whom he has educated at Oxford as a finished gentleman, is approached by his eldest son, Stephen, desiring to announce his own marriage with Martha Gibbs, an orphan girl, working in the factory for a living. Jasper Plum is a veritable parvenu, aping the airs of aristocracy, priding himself, as head of the family, he is probably destined to become grandfather to a peer of the realm. Stephen, his eldest son, having followed the practical example of his grandfather, has maintained the manners of the working people with whom he has been thrown in daily contact. To the disgust of Jasper, habited in the height of fashion, Stephen makes his appearance in the garb of a workingman, his clothes with patches of raw cotton adhering to them.]

STEPHEN PLUM. My mind's made up, I can't live without Martha; and here comes dad; so I'll strike while the iron's hot. (*retires up.*)

Enter JASPER.

JAS. All's done—the papers are signed—the factory folks are perfect in their parts *out* of doors—the servants are perfect in their parts *in* doors—I flatter myself the Plums will come out rather strong to meet the Leatherbridges.

STE. (*coming down, aside*). Now for it—(*plaintively*)—Dad!

JAS. You still here, and not dressed yet! Stephen, Stephen, is it your wish to drive me crazy?

STE I'll do that or anything else to make myself agreeable to dad, because I want dad to make himself agreeable to *me;* I want to tell dad a secret—I'm in love——

JAS. In what?

STE. In love! and don't mind to tell you *another* secret—it's with a woman!

JAS. In love with a woman?

STE Yes, and now you're in for it, I'll tell you a *third* secret—I want to marry her off-hand directly.

JAS. The boy's mad!—his brother's marriage has got into his head and turned it!—you marry? and marry a woman too?—what next, I wonder?

STE. Don't be angry, dad, I only want a wife of my own, like my father before me: so you'd very much oblige me if you'd just name the time and keep it.

JAS. Indeed! before I name the *time*, sir, perhaps you'll condescend to name the woman.

STE. Ah! now comes the squeedge! I say, dad, you see that hook atop of the ceiling—that's just where you'll jump to, when you hear who 'tis. Well, then, the woman I love, and want to marry is—Martha Gibbs. Now don't jump. (*holding* JASPER *down.*)

JAS. Martha Gibbbs!—ha, ha, ha,—come, I like this—there's some character about such damnable audacity—it tickles one to have one's hair stand on end!—Degenerate offspring, do you want to be the death of the house of Plum?

STE. Quite t'other thing, dad; I shouldn't wonder if I put a deal of new life into the house of Plum.

JAS. And do you think I'll ever sanction such an alliance for a son of mine? Never, never! The voice of all your ancestors exclaims, Never! never!

STE. Then I wish my ancestors would just speak when they're spoke to.

JAS. Reflect, rash youth, what was this creature, Martha!—a beggar asking charity.

STE. No she asked for wages, and paid you with hard work.

JAS. And *who* was she? I ask for her ancestry; she never had any; I ask for her parents; I don't believe she ever had any.

STE. Never had a father and mother? Then warn't she a clever girl to manage to do without?—ho, ho, ho!

JAS. Reflect like a man, sir, and don't laugh like a horse. I'll turn that intriguing hussy, Martha Gibbs, out of the house this very day.

STE. (*agitated*). Stop, dad, you *don't*—you can't mean that?

JAS. I *do* mean that, and I'll do it.

STE. (*sorrowfully*). No, you won't; you may save yourself the trouble *now* and the pain *afterwards*. Martha has given notice, she means to quit the factory to-morrow morning.

JAS. A pleasant journey to her!

STE (*assuming a tone of determination*). I hope so, 'cause I go along with her.

JAS. What did you say, sir?

STE. I go along with her.

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3. Across, over top of head, from ear to ear.

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CONTENTS.

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Chapter II. **Grease-Paints, their origin, components and use.**
Chapter III. **The Make-up Box.** Grease-Paints, Mirrors, Face Powder and Puff, Exora Cream, Rouge, Liquid Color, Grenadine, Blue for the Eyelids, Brilliantine for the Hair, Nose Putty, Wig Paste, Mascaro, Crape Hair, Spirit Gum, Scissors, Artists' Stomps, Cold Cream, Cocoa Butter, Recipes for Cold Cream.
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Chapter V. **Remarks to Ladies.** Liquid Creams, Rouge, Lips, Eyebrows, Eyelashes, Character Roles, Jewelry, Removing Make-up.
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